

The Story
of
Marcellus Muzz Rice
and
His Big Halley Kinnmen

BY
JOHN RICE IRWIN

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The Story
of
MARCELLUS MOSS RICE
and
His Big Valley Kinsmen

by
JOHN RICE IRWIN

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*For
Karen and Elaine*

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His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world "This was a man!"

—Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, V, 5

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following people who have made liberal contributions for first edition copies of this book. Because of the encouragement and interest shown by these descendants of the old Union County families, I have extended the appendix to include something of their lives as well. It is hoped that the link between the old pioneers and their progeny of today may be made more secure, and that these descendants may grasp something of the noble characteristics possessed by the hardy people who settled and developed Big Valley.

1. William H. Anderson Corryton, Tenn.
2. Henry Baker Route 12, Knoxville, Tenn.
3. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Baker Route 12, Knoxville, Tenn.
4. Ruth Baker Route 12, Knoxville, Tenn.
5. Oral Rogers Booker Etowah, Tenn.
6. Dr. George A. Bradfute Knoxville, Tenn.
7. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh M. Brown Sevierville, Tenn.
8. Margaret Cole Redondo Beach, Calif.
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18. Ruth Rice Irwin Rt. 1, Clinton, Tenn.
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38. Jack H. Weaver Washington, D. C.
39. J. Rector Weaver Knoxville, Tenn.
40. Georgia Loy Wright Corryton, Tenn.
41. Zola Longmire Sharp Burchfiel Sevierville, Tenn.
42. Major Leo A. Sharp Sevierville, Tenn.

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Introduction

The story of the life of Marcellus Moss Rice is, first of all, a simple one; yet it is steeped with the individualistic frontier spirit, the honesty, the adventure, and the freedom that is purely American. It is simple and authentic in its representation of millions of "common" Americans such as he.

Born into a beautifully rich valley hidden away among the forests and mountains of East Tennessee, "Sill" Rice remembers borrowing fire from a distant neighbor when his own hearth became cold, for there were no matches in Big Valley. Today he reads with keen interest the feats of the atomic age and of man's probes into outer space. The privilege of living in two such distinct and different eras has been awarded no other generation.

Sill Rice did not merely live *during* these vastly changing times, but he lived *with* the changing society. Though playing a minor role in the shaping of this society, he has observed and remembered it in its finest detail; perhaps this is most important, for having done so, he is able to reflect and relive with vivid perspective the whole panorama. And by the tales he tells of events both great and small, he brings us close to the changing times through which he has lived.

The five-hundred-mile trips down the treacherous Clinch and Tennessee Rivers on log rafts, the coal mining in the Cumberlands, the hazardous logging, the adventurous stays in Missouri, Illinois, and Oklahoma, his experiences in the Indian Territory, and his life as a soldier in the South and Puerto Rico are examples of his varied adventures. But with all of this, his life has primarily been one of long, hard toil and reflection; for he settled down and tilled the soil of the same farm for over fifty years.

The following short sketch about the life of Marcellus Moss Rice is written in the sincere desire that it will help some of the descendants of men such as he to appreciate more fully the tremendous contributions which have been made by our ancestors. It is intended to be more than the story of one man's life. In a much broader sense it is intended that the story of Sill Rice's life will reflect authentically the type of common men who, as sons of the pioneers, so nobly contributed to this nation's development. Moreover, it is hoped that some of the characteristics typical of the common man of his era and area, can be appropriately depicted. The fantastic perseverance, the willingness to labor prodigiously, the fierce loyalty and honesty, and the ability to bear the tedium of operating a one-man farm for half a century are examples of those characteristics which we wish to emphasize.



MARCELLUS MOSS RICE AT 89

"... and that big, black Newfoundland dog just shook the life out of that old timber rattler." Sill gestures vigorously as he relates how, as a boy in Big Valley, he watched his uncle's dog kill a giant rattlesnake.

CHAPTER I

As I Saw Him

A reddish fox squirrel clung head down from a hickory trunk forty feet above the ground, and, though stopped and still as the forest around him, the squirrel studied with seeming frustration the odd spectacle a hundred yards away. The eighty-five year old farmer did not see the squirrel, for it was to his west and the declining rays of the sun shone almost horizontally into his eyes.

For twelve hours and more Sill Rice had busied himself in his woodland world, having stopped only for a quick lunch when the lengthy morning shadows of the tall timber had crouched toward, and then disappeared at the stumps of the trees. He paused beside a great pile of saplings which he had cut and snaked; in a moment he would start loading his half-century old wagon and be off for home. It might be dark, but the horses could follow the mile-long wagon road out of the woods. They could follow the meanderings of the ill-defined trail and they wouldn't skin one tree in doing it.

Thin, though not from age, Sill Rice bore no unusual physical characteristics, except perhaps his countenance. One did not have to look closely into the face of this man to sense the satisfaction and serenity which he possessed. Here one could see reflected, not merely a temporary, ephemeral contentment. So long had the expression transmitted such characteristics of happiness and tranquility that, indeed, it would have been difficult for any other feeling to have been portrayed.

Sill loved every foot of his hundreds of acres. He loved the coves where the tulip poplar grew fast and straight; he loved the little freshets along which the sycamores grew, and he liked the old grown-up fields that had once been corned to death; he liked to watch the process of reforestation there. He even loved the high knobs which grew little more than ironwood shrubs, huckleberries, and copperheads.

But most of all, Sill loved his farm down on Bull Run Creek. He loved the big house where he had reared his family, and he loved the apple orchard, the cows and calves which grazed on the blue grass and clover, the old blacksmith shop, and the fields where he still plowed up Indian artifacts, an unintended reminder

of the Cherokee who had also cherished that land some two centuries before.

This land was his and it was his own domain. He was the lord, yet the vassal. But he would have had it no other way; for what tenant could be trusted with this land? Sill did not inherit this land, nor did he come by it easily. Almost three quarters of a century had gone into acquiring and improving it.

That one man would strive so enthusiastically, and so relentlessly to reach a goal is attestation to man's ability to achieve happiness through purpose. The story of how Sill Rice struggled to get this land, and how he nourished the depleted soil back to a prosperous, productive farm is not insignificant. There is to be discovered, somewhere from within the maze of events of his long and fruitful life, those factors contributing to his great exuberance and love of everything around him. It is a story worth telling, for he is a man worth knowing.

As his young grandson, I first came to know Sill Rice in the early thirties. My visits to his home were sometimes brief and always infrequent; but the interest and fascination with which I came to regard "Grandpa Rice's place" linger with me yet.

I was born in a downstairs room in the west corner of the big house, I understand. My mother, Ruth Annette, and my father, Glenn Irwin had lived with my grandmother and grandfather for a year, but moved to a home of their own in Union County soon afterwards.

On Sundays we used to drive over the crooked little dirt roads to visit my grandparents. Most of all I remember the summer visits. I remember the coolness of the air as we passed through long wooded stretches in the road, and I remember the exciting odor of mints that grew in the little creeks we forded, and the fresh smell of the honeysuckle that had grown over and covered the fence rows along the meandering roads. We passed old log barns around which rich weeds grew as tall as the rafters, where the standing cattle had enriched the earth. We passed quaint looking smokehouses whose board roofs were covered with green moss on the shaded side. We saw people walking, or sometimes riding their horses, to church. We passed little huddles of men sitting on the poplar benches in front of the closed-up country stores whittling red cedar, chewing tobacco, and talking. I

looked closely from the back seat of the car, and underneath the quaint black hats I could see the bright eyes of these old men with long white mustaches. I would have liked to stop and talk with them. Old men fascinated me.

When we finally reached the home of our grandparents, my brother, David, and I would be off to any one of a number of favorite spots of exploration before dinner. We might cross the rambling stone wall and wander through the maze of lilacs into the orchard to satisfy our gnawing appetite on sweet apples. We would walk down the rock strewn path to the spring surrounded by a grove of walnut trees, and a giant sycamore, and we would go inside the cool springhouse to bring the sweet milk and the butter to the house for dinner. There would be a crock for the drinking milk, the bread milk, the buttermilk—and one for the butter. Each was covered with a wide poplar board; and on top of this wooden cover a stone would be placed to keep the crock from floating away if the water happened to rise above the level of the milk.

Out in front of the old shop, where the chips from a dozen kinds of trees were ankle deep, we liked to sit in the warm sun and hack with the ax or use the drawing knife which we had secretly taken from the big wooden tool chest. The odor from the freshly cut trees and saplings and from the maple chips drying in the sun was very pleasing.

On the great white oak chop-block I recall the ax half buried in the wood, and around it there would be chicken feathers and blotches of blood. I knew we were having chicken for dinner; for Grandpa always chopped off the head—I never saw him wring a chicken's neck as we did at home.

I have a vivid recollection of the last minute preparation for dinner. Granny would be giving the orders: "Dad, pour the milk; Ruth, see if there's enough vinegar in the potato salad; you boys, bring up the chairs." When we were finally ready for the meal, the table was so filled with food that we hardly had room to eat. There were usually five or six different kinds of cooked vegetables; and then there were fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, and lettuce from the garden. There were always pies, cakes, and banana pudding—my grandmother always made banana pudding when she knew we were coming.

Sometimes David and I would be so full after dinner that we would just sit on the shaded front porch in the swing and listen to Grandpa tell of the "John Oaks' Murder" or of his

trips to the West. But after a short while, we would go out in the level field back of the barn where the Indians had once lived, and we would hunt arrowheads or tomahawks; and when we grew tired of this, we would walk down on the big bank above the Bull Run Bottoms and watch for ground hogs.

We would gather our pockets full of red plums along the old wagon road leading to the creek, and on our way back we would suck the juice from the little yellow tomatoes the size of the end of your thumb. We tried to eat the gooseberries which grew at the edge of the garden next to the fence, but they were too sour. These gooseberries, like the red-stemmed rhubarb which grew underneath them, made the most delicious pies, and Granny was unsurpassed when it came to a cobbler.

At times we would decide to walk up to Grandpa's great woodland known as the Hurricane, but it was so lonesome that we were almost afraid. It took almost all afternoon to follow the meanderings of the little log road, but sometimes Granny would encourage us to take a little brown bag of salt to the steers which were pastured up there. My grandfather kept only six or seven head of cattle in the Hurricane, because there was nothing but foliage of the forest for them to eat, and cattle don't fatten well on tree leaves. The steers were always so poor that you could count their ribs. We put the salt on the old logs which had once been a part of the house where Painter Smith lived, and the half wild herd came running after it as if they were starved. Sometimes we found where the cattle had licked out great holes in the ground where little wet weather springs brought to the surface an abundance of salt. The deer once satisfied their craving for salt in the same manner along the little stream, the pioneers had reported. That's how Lick Creek got its name.

My grandfather had built several small buildings of different kinds around the house and barn, and we periodically explored them all. All the lower side of one such building, and half underground, was a little room where he stored his potatoes, and kept the vinegar barrel. This was reached by a crude walk built of limestone, which was completely shaded by a giant box elder tree and by a thick foliage of ivy. We liked to pull the plug from the big wooden barrel, smell the vinegar, taste it, and drink a little. Inside we could sometimes see a dark mass which we were told was the "mother" of the vinegar. All during the summer, when apple peelings were not used to make jelly, they were put in the vinegar barrel. We always wondered how this "mother" could make vinegar from apple peelings.



BESIDE THE ANCIENT WATER WHEEL

Sill and Ibbie pose beside the Old Rice Mill. The picture was taken in 1946—they were 73 years of age.

As the afternoon wore on there would often be "company from town" come to visit my grandparents. Grandma, especially, had many relatives in Knoxville, and they often drove out to see her on Sunday afternoon. They would spend much time in the yard looking at the flowers which Granny raised. She had flowers planted all around the edge of the fence, and she had what I thought was every specie of flower and cactus that existed. They were in little pots, in large kettles, in wash tubs, and in big home-made wooden boxes. Each winter they were carried to the basement, but in the spring they were brought out into the yard again.

When the shadows grew long and cool, when the cows started gathering around the barn to be milked, and when the vociferous flock of hens gathered at the wire gate of the back yard for their corn, we knew that we must be on our way. And it was with reluctance and sad hearts that my brother and I climbed into the back seat of the old Chevrolet to go home. It might be several weeks before we would get to return.

There were times when David or I would spend a few days with our grandparents. We were lonesome when we were separated, for we were nearly the same age and inseparable companions. But we enjoyed being at Grandpa's nonetheless.

I can remember awaking from my upstairs room at Grandpa's in what seemed to be the middle of the night; but I knew it wasn't the middle of the night because I could sense the pleasing aroma of coffee floating up the stairwell and into my room. Across the little creek at Schaad's place I could hear the rooster crowing for day, and a little later I could hear another at the George place on the other side of Bull Run Creek; then I could faintly hear a rooster crow far in the woods to the north and I thought it was at the old log house where my Aunt Jane Baker lived.

My grandfather had chickens that roosted in the pear tree near the garage, and they answered the neighbor's roosters. I'm sure they never met but only communicated with one another at this early hour. I liked to listen to these roosters crowing for daylight and to feel the cool breeze, laden with dew, sweep over my bed. But their crowing sounded lonesome, and I was most homesick when I awakened in the early morning to hear them in the distance.

Grandpa was always up by four o'clock, and often earlier. When I came down the long stairs for breakfast, he had already returned from the barn where he had fed, milked, and tended

the stock. As the first streaks of day appeared in the east, he would have harnessed his team of horses and made ready to start work in the fields.

My grandparents took their daily cup of coffee for breakfast, and always permitted me to do the same, even when I was quite small. I disliked the taste, but gulped it down with an air of gusto, partly because there was a certain connection, at least in my mind, between drinking coffee and being "grown up." I even learned to dip my freshbaked biscuit into the steaming liquid and eat it as did my grandpa.

I sometimes packed the hay on the wagon for my grandfather down in the Bull Run Bottoms, and I would become so tired that I could hardly lift my arms from moving the hay from place to place. My legs would ache from tramping the soft dusty cowfeed. Grandpa had a little ladder which he kept tied to the back of the wagon; and when I became unable to keep the hay packed properly, he would climb up on the load and help "straighten it out." Then he would rush down to the ground and start throwing up the shocks of hay again.

Finally the load would become almost as high as the big domeshaped barn, or so I thought, and I was almost afraid to look down at my grandfather as he strained far below to toss a small fork-full of hay to the top of the wagon. He would hold the fork by the very end of the handle and would extend his arms as high as he could, and even then he could barely reach the top of the load. Every time he succeeded in loading a fork of hay, the chaff and dust would surge down the side of the load and into his face and eyes. Sometimes a whole bunch of hay and briers would fall back on him and mingle with the sweat on his sunburned face. He never said anything—I never heard him complain or saw him the least bit angry.

At the barn I would hook the little mare to the cable-rope, and my grandfather would set the hayfork. When he was ready, I would start the mare out toward the house; and when the hay was pulled as far back into the barn as he wanted it, Grandpa would trip it. Then he would climb into the barn and scatter the hay while I was bringing the mare back.

We sometimes worked until dark in weather so hot that I wished I had nothing to do but lie down by the big spring underneath the sycamore tree. We would have supper on the back porch where the cool air seemed always to play underneath the big shade trees and around Grandma's flowers. The culinary

odors mingled in perfect proportion with those of hundred kinds of blossoming plants just beyond the screened-in porch.

Sometimes after supper, if the moon was shining brightly, my grandpa would go back down to the irregular shaped little meadow on the creek to shock the hay until far into the night. I remember that he did not wear his mutilated old hat when he worked at night, for he needed no protection from the sun.

I did not return to the fields in the evening, but would sit on the front porch in the darkness with my grandmother. The katydids "sang," or as Granny said, "hollered" in the wildest sort of confusion up on the knob above the house. Occasionally we could hear the lonesome and mysterious call of the whippoorwill from the dark forests of the Hurricane tract; and in harmonious accord with this, there was always the soft roaring of Lick Branch down below the spring house. Finally we would retire to bed, and I never knew when my seventy-five-year-old grandfather came home from the hayfield.

My grandmother, for many years, kept a flock of ducks which spent most of their hours down on Lick Branch in the general vicinity of the spring house. Ostensibly, her purpose in keeping these ducks was to eat the thousands of periwinkles which clung to the brown stones that littered the bottom of the swift-running stream. These little animals, if eaten by Granny's chicken hens, would prove fatal. But the razor-sharp shells of the little black periwinkles did not bother the ducks. At least that's the way Grandpa explained it to me.

The ducks laid a few eggs in the sand and mud along the banks and underneath the willows; but it was always a difficult task to "hunt the duck eggs." A more utilitarian reason, and I suspect the real reason for bothering with these unruly fowls, was for the feathers which they supplied. "Your grandmother picked those ducks and filled dozens and dozens of pillows," Grandpa said. "And she filled the feather beds too."

The ducks ranged farther and farther down Lick Branch, and finally they started frequenting Bull Run. Every afternoon after the other chores were finished, Grandpa would have to search the creek banks looking for this flock of wayward ducks. Then he would have the slow and tedious task of driving them home. "Those ducks kept wandering farther away," Grandpa stated, "and finally Ibbie said, 'we'll just have to get rid of those ducks.' And we did. We sold them to the old peddler who used to come by. That was the end of the ducks."

In the fall of the year when crisp, invigorating winds blew the big rusty sycamore leaves into the creeks where they floated like a thousand odd-shaped boats, Grandpa would sometimes have one of the neighbors to bring in a "cut-off" saw to cut the winter's wood. This was always a big event for there would be several of the colorful neighbors who would stop by during the day when they heard the noisy little motor echoing across the countryside.

In the morning the little home-made contraption looked pathetic sitting at the edge of the immense pile of poles and saplings to be cut into stovewood and firewood. But the men fed the logs to the whining circular saw all through the day, and several of us boys carried the short, freshly-cut wood to the woodshed where it was stored from the rain and snow. When the day was over, the colossal pile of wood was gone, and the leaning woodshed was stacked to the rafters with good green firewood, smelling sweetly and being explored cautiously by one or two honeybees.

That night we would pop corn and roast peanuts on the open fire. Sometimes, if it were the Christmas season, we would have oranges and tangerines. And when we ate these fruits we would carefully stack the peelings on the warm hearth in front of the fire to dry. Upon drying they became inflammable, and served my grandfather well when he came to kindle the fire the following morning. My grandparents wasted nothing.

When I could stay awake no longer, I went into the cold of the upstairs to my room. Granny came with me, and brought along her two irons, heated thoroughly by the fire, and wrapped in a thick woolen blanket. These irons she placed under the cover and at the foot of my bed so that my feet became very warm. And as the fatigue drained slowly from my legs, I fell fast asleep and never knew when the irons cooled.

When I became a little older, I used to drive my grandparents to visit their many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Most of the time my grandfather would go along reluctantly or not at all. We could go in any direction and stop on almost any road, I thought, and find some relative who would just insist that we have a meal with them. And likewise we could go to Knoxville and find a relative or acquaintance on almost any street, it seemed.

Once I accompanied my grandmother to Washington to visit her elder daughter, Ruby, who worked for the government. (She has since been chosen for "Who's Who of American Women" in

the field of biological science.) As we started to leave for the trip, my grandparents suddenly discovered that I was wearing a little red cap, and they immediately concluded that it should be replaced by a hat. Granny went to one of the upstairs rooms where my grandfather had discarded his ancient felts with the very wide brims; and after a while she returned beaming triumphantly because she had succeeded in saving the day by finding the quaint old hat.

I stood there before the fire with my light blue suit that I had proudly bought with twelve dollars of my trapping money, and eyed the operation with growing suspicion. The hat was placed upon my head by Grandma with as much pride as if it were a crown; and when she removed her hands, it fell to my ears, and I stood there barely able to see. "Now," I thought, "this will put an end to the hat business," but it didn't. They were not to be outdone.

"Give me a paper, Dad," Grandma demanded. And staright-way my grandfather returned with an issue of *The Knoxville Journal*. I think they stuffed the whole sixteen pages behind the sweat band, and when I tried it on again it fit "perfectly," or so they decided. But in the last minute preparations, I managed to "forget" the hat and took instead my little red cap. Granny lamented half the way to Washington that I had been so careless.

There came a time when I was away at school a good deal, and later to the army, and my visits to the Rice homestead on Bull Run became irregular; but when I did go, I could see that Grandma's health was failing fast. In and out of the hospital several times, she first became crippled, then virtually blind; but in all the misery I never heard one word of complaint. I can see her now, lying on the sofa in front of the fire, her face beaming when she recognized my voice. She would try to sit up, but sometimes her strength waned and she would have to lie down again. My grandfather waited on her with joy and satisfaction, but her condition worsened.

When Grandma died, there came to the Rice house a very large crowd; and when I arrived, people were standing alongside the road, in the front yard, and on the front porch. There were well-dressed men from Knoxville, and there were many of the farmer neighbors, dressed in their everyday overalls. Every room in the big house seemed filled, and I could hear Grandpa say, "She was in the same bed that her mother died in."

It wasn't long before the black hearse came up the hill to the house, and as they carried the body of my grandmother out of her home which she had helped build over fifty years before, the old men and the young boys all removed their hats and stood in respectful silence. I could see that some were quietly weeping. The faint breeze played among the green maple leaves, and the creek sighed very softly and with melancholia as my grandmother's lifeless body was wheeled away.

I remember watching my grandfather stand in the doorway of the little country church beside my grandmother's casket and view for the last time the woman to whom he had been married for over fifty years. He stood there a long time with his quaint old black hat crumpled tightly in one hand. Finally he uttered some words which I did not understand; then he went down the steps and into the wooded church-yard where the people came to him, shook his hand, and told him what a fine woman Grandma was. They carried my grandmother across the little dirt road to the cemetery beside a pine thicket, and Grandpa went back to the big house on Bull Run Creek to start a new life—alone. The year was 1956, and Sill Rice was almost eighty-five.

On quiet spring mornings when the warm sun pulls the lush grass and dainty flowers from the cold wet earth, and when the smell of fresh turned soil from a neighbor's field brings back nostalgic memories of the Lost Creek farm, Grandpa may be seen hacking away in the unplowed garden near the barn. But the heat of the summer has grown more unbearable each year, and the winters have become so severe that he can stand but a few minutes exposure. Twice in the past two years he has entered the hospital (events which he talks of with reluctance and with an air of humiliation), and for the first time in his life he spends most of the day close to the stove and reads history without the use of glasses.

I visited him on a cold night in December and found the front door standing fully open, a means he has of letting people know he is home. He doesn't hear well and is always concerned that a visitor will leave thinking he is away visiting with his daughter, Ruth.

I walked through the long hall, around the staircase, and finally encountered him in the far corner of the kitchen reading

Dickens' *History of England*. There were piles of wood and kindling about the room, and buckets of coal near the stove. He appeared warmly bundled and sat within two feet of the stove for there was but little fire.

His full head of hair, which is not quite grey, was combed down his forehead, but angled to the right, and he had not shaved in days. His eyes brightened as he realized he had a visitor, and he carefully laid his book on a nearby table and greeted me in a most warm and genuine manner.

He talked of my mother Ruth who comes every few days to bring him potatoes, eggs and other staples. He gave me a letter which he had received from his daughter Ruby who lives in Washington. He fondly mentioned the recent accomplishments of Ruby's twins, Melvin and Gordon, and of the musical talent of their sister, Alice. His only visitor for the past ten days had been Grandma's brother Rector who comes regularly each month. My grandfather spoke, too, of the neighbors whom he rarely sees any more.

I made myself a cup of coffee and sat in the hundred year old white oak chair and listened to the old man wind slowly through a story about the murder of his cousin, old Henry Snoderly, and his wife. He spoke with feeling, and he talked with clarity and searched carefully for just the right word. He would pause often to meditate, lest he misrepresent an insignificant fact; then he would continue.

"Well now, Rice," Grandpa said as he started to kindle the fire with some thick black oak bark, "I can remember most everything that happened through my life. But here lately my mind concerning recent events is failing me some. I can tell it," he continued in dead earnest. "My mind is just failing me a little.

"But I'm just so glad that you're interested in your ancestors—all of our people. I lay awake at night trying to think of something that will help you in your book. I try to think of everything the old folks told me way back when I was just a little boy. Oh, I know you can't use it all, but I want you to use what you want to."

The old man paused for a while, musing I thought, about the book which he was so desperately interested in. Never once had he said anything which would indicate that he was impatient about its completion; but I sensed what he was thinking. "I just hope," he said "that I live to see your book completed. Now I'm

not rushing you," he added quickly and apologetically, "because I know you're awfully busy."

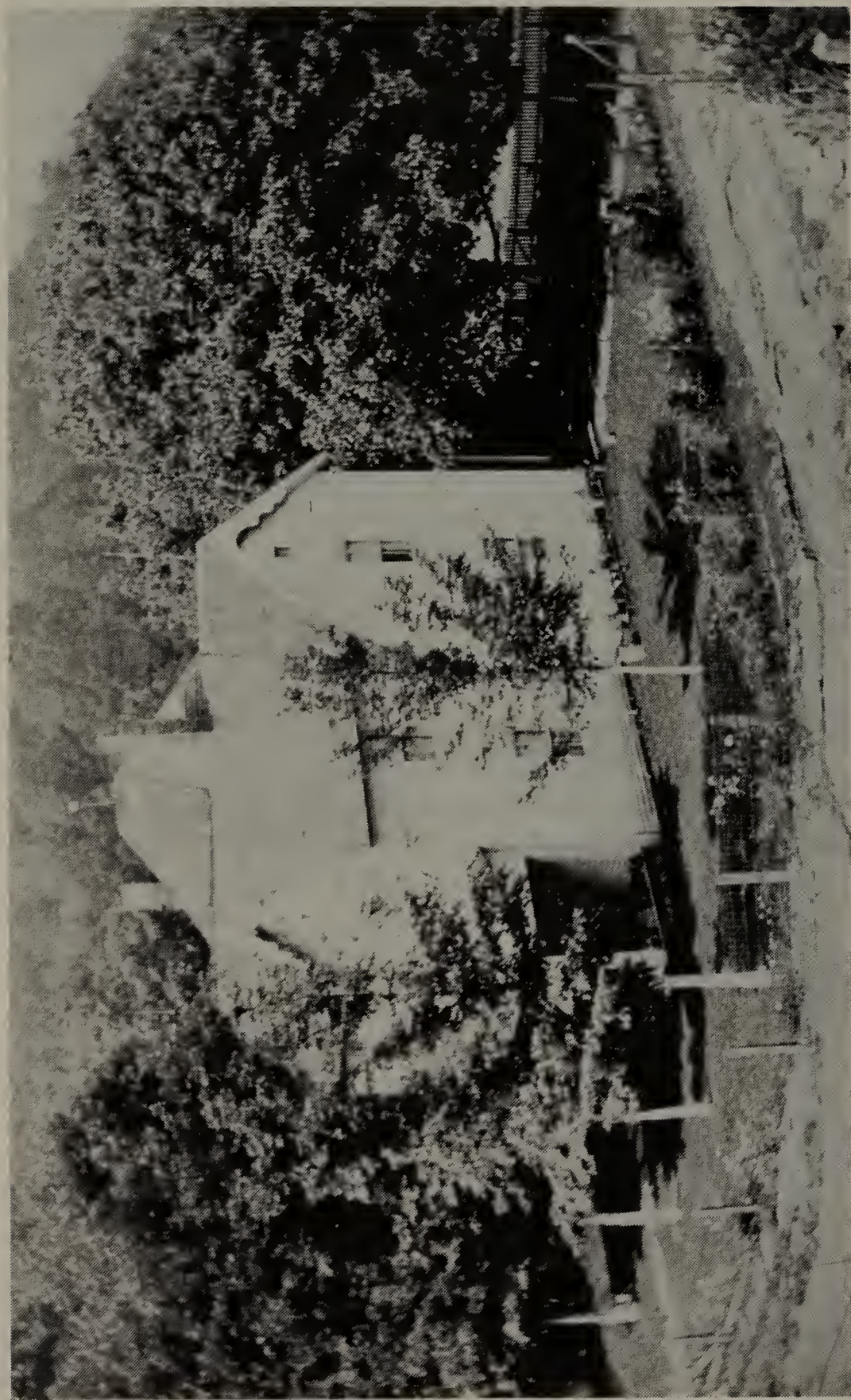
Time slipped swiftly by, and when I went out into the back yard to check the snow, I realized that I was stranded for the night. I stood there on the rock walk as the white puffs of snow sailed aimlessly through the branches of the dormant maple trees and piled deeper and deeper; and the only sound I heard was that of the water rushing over the ledges in the little creek at the foot of the hill. There were large potted flowers which sat on the back porch and on the walk because they never got carried to the basement. A half hundred times Grandpa had carried these flowers in and out of the basement, but for the past few years the heavier ones were left near the door to be killed by the winter's cold.

There were old wooden planes on the back porch, their knives speckled with rust for they too did not get put up. There were benches half made, and there was screen rusted out; and all this would go unattended. Over on the hill at Schaad's, a rooster crowed for it was near midnight; but there was no rooster out in Grandpa's pear tree to answer back.

When I told my grandfather that I was snowed in for the night, he laughed happily. "You're stranded in a mighty poor place," he said, "but maybe we can find you a bed to sleep in." We did find a bed, and after we removed a dozen types of articles from it, we piled on several quilts which Grandma had made, for there was no heat in the room. "I'm getting awful soft and lazy in my old days," Grandpa grinned. "I sleep under an electric blanket."

This was the first time I had spent the night with my grandfather in fifteen years, perhaps longer. Except for the absence of my grandmother, the house seemed about the same. I could not tell that the furniture had been changed since I first slept in the room as a small boy and watched the flickering of the fire in the little wood-burning stove.

I kept thinking of the electric blanket under which Grandpa lay, and how strange it was that the old man who never had a store-bought shirt until he was grown, and who had spent his life sleeping on a feather bed or straw tick would end up with such an innovation. I thought, too, of the extent which the entire area had changed since my grandfather was a child in nearby Big Valley.



THE HOUSE THAT SILL AND IBBIE BUILT

"We just used the old wooden hand-plane and we dressed every board that went into this house. We did most of the work on rainy days and at nights after we came in from the fields."

Just a few miles away was Norris Dam, the building of which was recently acclaimed as having been among the one hundred most important events in the history of the world.¹ The first of the TVA series of many dams, it was the largest all concrete dam in the world at the time of its construction. Although the backwaters of Norris Dam had flooded his ancestral home in Big Valley, Grandpa held no malice toward the TVA.

A few miles further down Clinch River, still within minutes of Grandpa's isolated home, stood the mammoth Oak Ridge installations, symbolizing the atomic era. Within the very shadows of world famous Oak Ridge there loomed the Kingston Steam plant, largest in the entire world. More interesting, the Tennessee Valley Authority had just commenced another project on Bull Run Creek—the same little stream that flows through my grandfather's meadows some three hundred yards from his house. This will be the new Bull Run Steam plant. It is to be built at the phenomenal cost of \$100,000,000.00, and will be three times as large as the world's largest Kingston plant.

My grandfather reads the Knoxville papers thoroughly and he picks up the newscasts from the radio—he is surprisingly aware of the progress the area is making. It has been fascinating to him, I think, to have had the opportunity to live during these two different eras, for not only has he lived during these contrasting times; but he has had a part in ushering in this new era which is not so strange to him as one might imagine.

On a more recent visit to my grandfather's I found signs of spring everywhere. The maples surrounding his house were bursting with crumpled, yellowish leaves, the blue grass peeped from the moss-covered ground, and the flowers which Granny had planted along the rock wall at the east end of the old orchard bloomed in profusion. But the garden plot beside the barn lay unbroken; and my grandfather was somewhere within the big house.

"I've just been settin' here all winter," he said apologetically. "The days are getting pretty, and sometimes when it is warm I go out to look about the cows they've got on my place and to cut some of the wild onions. But I get so weak that I just have to come back in and take a drink of milk. But the wild

onions are coming," he grinned. "This is April and the wild onions are coming whether I can cut them off or not."

For whatever reasons that make it impossible to cogently characterize his life, one thing can be established at the outset; the road which Sill Rice trod was no easy one. He has seen hard times, and he has possessed the unrelenting drive and almost inhuman determination to keep going.

From whence did Sill and his compatriots derive their tough capacity to succeed over formidable odds, and where did they derive their gentle but exuberant love for life? Were these traits acquired from association with those industrious and unselfish Big Valley neighbors, or were they inherited from those unsung pioneer forebears whose capabilities were daily weighed and measured by the hardships of the frontier? Perhaps these questions can be answered in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER II

Something of the Rice Family History

At the age of 101 years, Old Henry Rice was put to rest on a lonely hill overlooking Big Valley, in what is now Union County, Tennessee. Farmer, miller, Indian fighter, and pioneer in the truest sense, this old patriarch, who was born nearly sixty years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, had spent his long life moving westward into the savage wilderness. He was the great, great-grandfather of Sill Rice and the earliest ancestor about whom we have any appreciable information.

It has been established that Henry was born in the general area of Richmond, Virginia, probably Hanover County, in 1717. The Rices were evidently among the first families to come to America. There is record of a Henry Rice killed by Indians "at Weynoach of Sir George Yeardley," in Virginia in 1622—only two years after the landing of the Pilgrims.¹

In that same year a bloody war developed between the colonists and the Indians. On the night of March 22, about three hundred fifty of the colonists were massacred. Other attacks followed. These Indian attacks, along with disease and famine, reduced the colonists from four thousand to a mere twenty-five hundred.

A Nicholas Rice, in 1687, was designated "at a court held for the county of Middlesex," as a being "capable to serve as a footman and to finde (himself) with armes."² There are records of numerous other Rices in Hanover, Spotsylvania, Orange, and other Virginia counties in the area north of Richmond at a very early date.

In addition to the Virginia Rices, there were many Rices in Massachusetts, stemming from the well-known Deacon Edmond Rice who came to America in 1638. Although many of the Christian names of the Virginia Rices and those of the Massachusetts Rices are the same, efforts to connect the two lines have not met with complete success.

The Rices also came into North Carolina at a very early date. King George, in a letter dated 1734, appointed Nathaniel Rice as "president" of the Province of North Carolina. In the letter, the King referred to this Rice as "our trusty and well beloved Nathaniel Rice, Esquire."³ Upon the death of Governor Burrington, this letter pointed out, the government of the province would

"devolve upon the Honorable Nathaniel Rice," as first Chancellor. It further stated that he would assume the title of "President and Commander-in-Chief."⁴

It seems that Nathaniel was appointed to the presidency of the province a second time, when Governor Johnson died in 1752. But President Rice, described by the colonial records as being "old and feeble" himself, died in 1753.⁵ Even as early as 1703 there is record of a Daniel Rice serving on a grand jury "att a General Court Holden att ye house of Captain Hecklefield in Little River."⁶

Many Christian names of the North Carolina Rices were the same as those commonly used by the Virginia Rices. The name of John, however, seems to have been the most predominant in North Carolina. In the Colonial Records alone, there is mention of some sixteen different John Rices. John Rice, son of "President" Nathaniel Rice was mentioned most frequently.

Family tradition has it that the Rices came from the picturesque little country of Wales. The genealogical editor of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, on March 24, 1907, answered a query by saying that the Rices were Welsh descendants of "Kings of the eighth century," and that they had been known as "Ap Rhys." The prefix "Ap" in Southern Wales denoted distinction or nobility.

Several researchers have traced the Rices back to Rice Ap Griffith of Wales who married Catherine Howard.⁸ It is a matter of history that Catherine Howard was descended from William the Conqueror, King Henry I, Henry II, King John, Henry III, and Edward I.

Rice Ap Griffith was the twentieth in paternal descent from Vryan Reged, Lord of Kidwelly, Carunllon, and Yskenen, in South Wales.⁹ The issue of the marriage of Rice Ap Griffith and Catherine Howard was William Rice, born in 1522, who was reported to have been the father of Edmund Rice, the first immigrant to America bearing that name.¹⁰ This William Rice was knighted by Queen Mary in 1555. At that time Sir William Rice was living in Bucks County, Ireland.¹¹

The motto of the Rice coat-of-arms, granted to William in 1555, was "Fides non Timet."¹² L. D. Brewer, of Long Beach, California, who has done genealogical research on the Rices, translates this motto freely as meaning "faithful" or "loyal." The name of Rice is derived from the ancient Welsh baptismal name of Rhys, probably meaning the "red-haired."

Another search into the history of the Rice coat-of-arms, this one made by Professor W. H. Thomas of Athens, Tennessee, adds weight to the notion that the Rices were descended from British Royalty. From certain inquiries, Mr. Thomas obtained information indicating that the families of Rice and Thomas had an identical coat-of-arms. Further, this research revealed that these two families stemmed from a Welsh Chieftain, Sir Rhys Ap Thomas, a natural son of Geoffrey Plantagenet.¹⁴

It seems substantiated that our Henry Rice spent his early years in Hanover County, Virginia, near Richmond. Although several of his descendants have recently attempted to ascertain some authentic data concerning the early life of Henry Rice, his father, and his wife, none to my knowledge have met with success. The writer has found record of a Henry Rice who was married to Margaret Rice in 1737.¹⁵ This Henry was living in Orange County at the time. I feel that this is the same Henry Rice, who in 1731 purchased two hundred acres of land in Spotsylvania County from Robert Coleman for the price of sixteen hundred pounds of tobacco. I doubt that this was our "Tennessee Henry Rice," although one can speculate that they were cousins, since they lived in the same general area. It is possible that they both were descended from the Henry Rice who was killed by Indians in 1622.

But "Tennessee Henry" did purchase land in Hanover County, using tobacco as currency. Later he pulled stakes for South Carolina where he lived for an undetermined number of years in what was known as the Pendleton District. It is believed by Professor Thomas that Edmund Pendleton, an "enterprising patriot" of Orange County, Virginia, sent Henry Rice to this section of South Carolina as a colonist in Pendleton's domain.

Henry had thirteen children, and at least some of them lived in South Carolina for a time. The 1790 census, for example, shows that his oldest son, James, was living in Pendleton District near Spartanburg. At this time, however, Henry had already left South Carolina for his new home in Tennessee.

There is evidence to support the existence of a close relationship between Old Henry and a Sheriff Thomas Rice of Caswell County, North Carolina. Both men came from Hanover

County, Virginia. Sheriff Thomas Rice was the father of John Rice, a great land speculator in Tennessee, and friend of President Andrew Jackson. This John Rice owned hundreds of thousands of acres of land in Middle and West Tennessee, including the lands on the Mississippi around the Chickasaw Bluffs. This Chickasaw Bluff tract, containing some five thousand acres, was willed by John Rice to his brother Elisha Rice who in turn sold it to Andrew Jackson, John Overton, and James Winchester. These men founded the city of Memphis.

The year 1791 found Trader John Rice on the Cumberland with a small party including three sons of the famous Valentine Sevier. They were bound for Nashville where they were to enlist as spies against Doublehead, the Indian warrior. Ironically, Doublehead ascertained their mission and ambushed the party at a place known as Seven Mile Ferry. John Rice, the three Sevier boys, and a man named Curtis were killed and scalped.¹⁶

Ann, a daughter of Sheriff Thomas Rice, married Colonel James Williams of Kings Mountain fame. He was a brother to Colonel John Williams, once a United States Senator from Tennessee, and the grandfather of Attorney General James C. J. Williams, the grandfather of the playwright Tennessee Williams. W. H. Thomas was well acquainted with General James Williams, and recalls that he often spent his summer vacation at his old Powell River home. Thomas describes Tennessee Williams' grandfather as a man who "liked to fish, talk with Father, eat at Mother's sumptuous table, and above all, stroll through Mother's beautiful flower garden on paths paved with mussel shells."

W. H. Thomas says that Old Henry came from South Carolina to Tennessee before 1775. This was only six or seven years after the first white settlers had moved into the present bounds of the state. "It is my opinion," Thomas says, "that he (Henry) came with Jacob Brown to help settle a new colony at Brown's store not far from Jonesboro."¹⁷ In the year 1775, Henry Rice constructed a gristmill on a tributary of the Holston River, a few miles southwest of the present site of Kingsport.¹⁸

Robert White, in his widely accepted Tennessee History, mentions the building of a gristmill on Buffalo Creek in Carter County about 1775, and indicates that this was the first one erected in what is now Tennessee. He mentions Michael Bacon as having built a mill four years later (1779) on Little Limestone Creek in Washington County some six miles southwest of Jonesboro.¹⁹ (This was near the little cabin on the Nolichucky River where Davy Crockett was born).

Since the Tennessee Historical Society has established the fact that the Rice mill was built in 1775, it then is possible that Henry Rice built the first gristmill in the state of Tennessee. It seems certain that he built a gristmill in the same year as the first one constructed in the state.

The Revolutionary War started in the meantime and the people in this area were not long in taking up arms against the British. They felt that the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, John Stuart, had encouraged the Indians to attack the Whites along the frontier. Since this area had not yet been fully surveyed and was still thought to be within the bounds of Virginia, Colonel Arthur Campbell of Washington County, Virginia, issued an order to Captain Robertson to "keep the Watauga people assembled in two places for mutual protection and safety." He designated Patton's Mill and Rice's Mill as the most suitable points because of the weakness of the settlement below the forts.²⁰

Since the Rice mill was located at the very brink of the dark unexplored wilderness, it was quite natural that it should come to be used as a sort of fort by the Whites in their fighting with the Cherokee. Carter's store, located a mile from Henry's mill, was pillaged by the Shawnees in 1774.²¹ And in 1777, Captain James Robertson (later called the Father of Middle Tennessee) along with eight other men fought about forty Indians at the Rice Mill. During the melee, a Frederick Calvitt (Calvert) was scalped.²² As a result of the participation of Henry Rice in these skirmishes during the Revolutionary War, his descendants are eligible to join the Daughters of the American Revolution.²³

In 1776, Old Henry Rice, along with sons John, Charles, and William, was a member of an expedition against the Cherokee led by Colonel William Christian. Also in this expedition were William and Benjamine Rice (thought by Maude Turnbow to be possible grandsons of Old Henry) and Henry Rice's son-in-law, David Smith.²⁴

The Hawkins County Records reveal that in 1786, Henry Rice still owned land on the Holston River, the site of his mill. Six years later, however, in 1792, the Hawkins County Deeds indicate that Henry Rice sold two hundred acres of land to a Jane Evans for "65 pounds of current money of Virginia."²⁵ The fact that Virginia money was specified is further indication that the people of this area considered themselves to be in Virginia, although in reality this area was a part of North Carolina.

In 1787, Henry Rice acquired a mile square tract of land in what was later to be known as Big Valley in Union County, Tennessee. This six hundred forty acre tract of land was conveyed to Henry Rice by Governor Richard Spraight Dobbs at New Bern, North Carolina. This property, in Land Grant number four hundred ninety, was sold to Henry Rice at the rate of fifty shillings per each hundred acres.²⁶

Since this section of land was located in the heart of the valley, well blessed by a number of creeks and springs, one wonders if Henry, then seventy years of age, had not inspected the property before purchasing it.

It is believed that James Rice, Henry's oldest son, did not leave South Carolina until about 1795. Perhaps some of Henry's younger children had accompanied him from South Carolina some twenty years earlier. As far as we know, James did not tarry long at his father's home on the Holston in Hawkins County, but rather came on into Big Valley to the section which Henry had acquired. It is possible that Old Henry and James came into Big Valley at the same time. Tradition has it that the very first pioneers coming into Big Valley did so by means of log rafts down the Clinch River. It would have been difficult, indeed, for them to reach this lush, sequestered valley by any other means at that time.

It is not intended here to imply that the Rices were the very first to settle Big Valley. It is believed that James Rice was preceded to the valley a few years earlier by the five Sharp brothers, Levi Hinds, Sebastian (Boston) Graves, Peter Graves and others. Many other families soon settled in the fertile but sheltered valley in the vicinity of Old Henry Rice's section of land. These Scotch-Irish and German families included the Hills, who sprang from Matthew Hill of Danbury, in Stokes County, North Carolina, and the Snodderlys, also of North Carolina but of German origin. Other prominent families who pioneered the settlement in Big Valley were the Ousleys, Smiths, Wilsons, Kecks, Loys, Stooksburys, Longmires, Dukes, Irwins, and Stiners.

The first settlement in the valley was known as Sharp's Station, and was located on Clinch River within a mile or two of the Rice property. According to old residents of Big Valley, the palisaded fort, or station, as it was then called, was built even before White's Station, the present site of Knoxville. Since General James White built his fort in August 1785, W. H. Thomas speculates that Sharp's Station was settled in 1784. Thomas

points out that Sharp's Station was of sufficient importance that on June 8, 1792 the first County Court of Knox County, sitting at White's Fort, authorized the building of a road "from White's Fort to the ford on Clinch River."

Sharp's Station is believed to have been named for William "Station Bill" Sharp, one of the five brothers. Logs from the old station remained on the farm of Henry Sharp long after the last Cherokee had left the area.

Sill himself is the great, great-grandson of "Station Bill's" brother, Henry Sharp. Henry Sharp's son Konrad, or Coonrod, married the daughter of pioneer Nicholas Gibbs, who settled in Knox County in 1792, and was a member of Knox County's first Quarterly Court. Nicholas Gibbs, who was born in Germany, was another great, great-grandfather of Sill Rice and also an ancestor of William Gibbs McAdoo, United States Secretary of the Treasury, three times contender for the Democratic nomination for President, and son-in-law of President Woodrow Wilson.

Sill was also a descendant of Elijah Longmire, who is believed to be the first man bearing that name to come into Big Valley. Elijah Longmire, the forebear of thousands of descendants in this area today, was the son of William Longmire who recorded a will in North Carolina. Some researchers believe that William Longmire came to this country from England, but Professor Thomas believes that the name Longmire was originally Languemare, and is of Huguenot extraction.²⁷

The esteemed poet of Missouri, Martin Rice, recalled as a very small boy seeing Henry Rice, his great-grandfather, on his deathbed at Lost Creek. Henry lived near his daughter Elizabeth Smith, in what was referred to as the loom house, so named, we assume, because of its later use for weaving. This one room structure might have served as the first home of James Rice. It was not unusual for a pioneer to build a larger and more substantial log home after a year or so.

Old Henry Rice had spent most of his life on the outskirts of civilization; and during his last years, he helped transform Big Valley from a trackless wilderness to a peaceful farming community. He had heard the shrill cry of the fierce panther on a cold December night; he had traced the heavy prints of the

giant bear along the soft traces of the damp forests on an autumn day, and he had watched with amusement the playful deer which lingered near his cabin door after the darkness of night had lifted from the valley.

Henry had likely fired into the midst of the wild savages as with reckless fury they charged his corn mill on the Holston. In Big Valley he had possibly witnessed the men carrying the lifeless body of his young friend Peter Graves off Long Mountain, an Indian tomahawk still buried in his skull. While hunting alone on the mountain, Graves was killed and scalped on November 13, 1794.²⁸

At another time, while all the able-bodied men had gone to Kentucky to "make" salt, the Indians attacked the remainder of the settlement; but the women, children, and old men managed to take refuge in the fort and throw off the attack. We can imagine that Henry's many years of experience in dealing with Indians and his knowledge of their tactics made him "Commander" of the defense of Sharp's Station.

When Pioneer Henry Rice died in 1818, he became the second person to be placed to rest in the Lost Creek Cemetery. The first burial made in this historic cemetery, according to Rufus Rice, was a Revolutionary compatriot of Henry Rice who, while visiting old Henry, was stricken and died. His name is unknown.

This four acre tract, which was given by James Rice in perpetuity to be used for religious, educational, and burial purposes, became the resting place for hundreds of valley folk, including many of Old Henry's descendants. A tall limestone, crudely dressed in diamond shape, marks the grave of Henry. Recent inquiries revealed that only Marcellus M. Rice could designate the stone of this old pioneer.

Because the Daughters of the American Revolution wished to erect a monument at the grave of Henry Rice, Sill recently went with his grandson, David Irwin, to seek out the crude marker, scarcely visible among the woods of the Lost Creek Cemetery. After having reached the almost inaccessible cemetery, Sill wrote the following letter to W. H. Thomas, who had been instrumental in the effort to erect the historical marker:

May 4, 1959

Dear Mr. Thomas,

My very Dear Friend, I will now try to report to you, that I made the trip to the old cemetery on May 1st and I think I and David Irwin (his grandson) did mark the two Rice graves. We mark-



THE OLD LOST CREEK CEMETERY

At the age of 86 Sill stood among the roughly hewn limestones which marked the graves of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of his ancestors, relatives, and Big Valley Neighbors. He is facing the grave of his great, great-grandfather, Pioneer Henry Rice. In 1818 this Henry Rice, at the age of 101 years, became the second person to be buried in this cemetery.

ed two "X X" marks on the stake that we had driven at Henry Rice's grave, and one "X" on the grave stone of James Rice, and one "X" on the stake that we drove at his grave. So if by any chance the stake should get knocked down and missed placed, that the two "X X" on one stake will identify that as Henry's grave, and one "X" on the other as that of James Rice's grave. Now I think I marked the right graves and am pleased that you have made the arrangements to have the marker placed, and I hope to be able to live to go back and see them after they have been placed. . . .

One might well assume that the Rices had finally discovered the home for which they had been searching so many generations. These Celtic people of Welsh descent had been on the move almost from the time Rome invaded Britain, soon after the birth of Christ. Big Valley offered black, deep soil. There was abundant rainfall and a profusion of streams; most important there was freedom. To a very great extent they were living in the "state of nature" about which the philosophers John Locke and Thomas Hobbes spoke.

Perhaps these families had searched too long. They were no longer seeking a peaceful satisfactory place in which to live; their search had become an end within itself. They possibly came to love the adventure of moving into an unknown area—penetrating the vast, mysterious wilderness; and so, as their ancestors had done before, many of the sons and daughters of the old Rices moved to that enchanting land known as the West.

James Rice, or Uncle Jim as he was fondly called, saw most of his children grow to adulthood only to have them leave forever their kin and neighbors. In 1833, for example, three sons and three daughters of Uncle Jim Rice left the hills of East Tennessee for the rolling plains of western Missouri. He never saw them again.

The trip was well over a thousand miles the way they traveled, and the saga of this journey is a story within itself. Among the party making this trip was the young boy, Martin Rice, mentioned above. He was the son of Enoch Rice and the grandson of James. They settled on what Martin later described as the Old Indian Trace—later Cass County. Their nearest neighbor, he related, was a mile and a half away.

Almost seventy years after the compact little group of neighbors and relatives had migrated from Tennessee to that portion

of the West, Sill was in Missouri and visited the old poet in his home at a little place called Lone Jack, near Independence and Kansas City. Martin Rice was a leading citizen, historian, and writer of that section. He was reputed by the local paper to have been one of the smartest men of his age. Sixty-five years after Sill had looked up his relatives in Missouri, the writer of this biography (grandson of Sill Rice) also visited the area around Lone Jack. There I talked with Miss Manie Pilcher, granddaughter of Martin Rice. I saw the once sturdy old house, now decayed and falling, where Martin Rice had lived and died; and beyond that I saw the rich rolling fields where his father had settled as a pioneer.

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Soon after constructing a dwelling, James Rice, following in the footsteps of his father, built a water-powered gristmill on Lost Creek in Big Valley. The intricate cogs and shafts were skillfully hewn from hickory and oak; and the millstones, which usually were transported from France, were also fashioned by James from native stone.

When the Tennessee Valley Authority started buying the land in Big Valley one hundred fifty years later, they were so impressed with this picturesque mill that they made plans to reconstruct it. The mill now stands almost within the shadow of this first TVA dam, recipient of thousands of visitors from nearly every country in the world.

In 1949 this writer, then a high school senior, wrote a thirty-page booklet tracing the history of this old Rice Mill.²⁹ Since that time some twenty thousand copies have been sold throughout the United States. Purely by chance, many Rice descendants purchased copies of this booklet at the old mill; and from the people who purchased these booklets, I built up a correspondence with Rices in almost all the mid-western and western states. I have seldom met a Rice descendant who was not keenly interested in learning as much as possible of his ancestors. Hundreds of them, it seems, are working on some sort of genealogy.

When James Rice built this mill, he never dreamed that it would be featured in motion pictures, or that a nationally recognized encyclopedia would carry its picture, or that a magazine subscribed to by millions would spread The Water Mill's frontier likeness upon its cover. It never occurred to him that this

mill, so common a device in his day, would be standing a century and a half later, host to hundreds of visitors each day. The ingenuity depicted by the precision of the handmade wooden cogs were not designed for any purpose other than for practical use—yet they came to serve as attestation to him whose hands fashioned the ancient device. James Rice built the mill for utilitarian reasons—to grind corn meal for his neighbors and his own family.

Little authentic information is known of James Rice, of course, but old stories indicate that he was a generous and well-respected man in the community. Although one-eighth of all meal ground was the “toll” for grinding corn meal for as long as the mill stood in Union County, James Rice started the practice of grinding “free meal” for the poor families from the ridge country.

James had married Rebecca Miller, probably in South Carolina; for tradition has it that George Rice, their oldest son, and grandfather of Sill, was three years old when they moved into Big Valley. Rebecca was the sister, later research seems to reveal, of a Captain “Racoon” John Miller of some prominence in East Tennessee. Miller is reported to have purchased the present site of Middlesboro, Kentucky, from the Indians for a few jugs of whiskey. Interestingly, “Racoon” Miller was the first man to introduce the silk worm in the state of Tennessee—in Hawkins County in 1791. The *Knoxville Gazette* lauds the efforts of Captain Miller and his five million silk worms.³⁰ In the 1840’s the silk industry had become a great fad in the state; and “Lean” Jimmey Jones wore a silk suit made entirely of Tennessee grown silk when he was inaugurated as second term governor.³¹

When James Rice died in 1829, an inventory of the articles of his estate included the following: “sixteen head of cattle, ten head of hogs, twelve head of sheep, three head of horses, one sett of blacksmith’s tools, two beds and furniture, kitchen and household furniture, farming tools, ploughs, etc, one rifle gun, one old still and some old copper, some rye, corn, etc.”³²

Some two hundred items of a varied nature were sold from the estate on September 16, 1829. We assume this was a public auction, for the items were dispersed among a large number of

Big Valley settlers. Following is a partial list, the price received, and the purchaser.

One oven and lid—sold to Enoch Rice for \$1.50
One stone hammer—sold to Thomas Jackson for 75c
One draiving knife—sold to James Irwin for 50c
One cow and calf—sold to Thomas Jackson for \$7.81½
One cum—sold to John Brook for \$10.00
One wagon hub—sold to James Rice for 31¼c
Four hogs—sold to George Rice for \$11.64½
One still—sold to Nicholas Sharp for \$20.00
One hide—sold to John Brook for \$2.00
Twelve gees—sold to Enoch Rice for \$2.50
One sermon book—sold to John Albright for 25c
One plow—sold to Charles Rice for 81½c
One bull tongue plow—sold to William York for 121½c
Three stirup irons—sold to Peter Loy for 121½c

The net proceeds from this sale, according to the administrators, was "to the best calculation we can make, from the list of sale . . . \$493.50. Peter Loy, Elijah Hill, and Henry Sharp, having been appointed commissioners to lay off one year's support for Rebecca Rice, Widow of James Rice set aside the following items: five of her choice hogs, two of her choice cows and calves, one heifer, and 150 bushel of corn."³³

George Rice, son of James and grandfather of Sill, remained in Big Valley while his brothers and sisters went west. Being the oldest son, George inherited the mill and the blacksmith shop, and possibly a major portion of his father's land.

At a very early age, George Rice, along with George Snodderly, left home for a brief fight with the Indians. This is believed to have been during the War of 1812, at which time the British were again inducing the Indians in large numbers to take up arms against the Whites. Later, after the two young men returned from the war, they married one another's sisters—George Rice married Mary Snodderly, and George Snodderly married Tabitha Rice.

George operated the old gristmill from 1829 until his death in 1868. During this time he also managed the big farm and worked as a blacksmith. It was through his work as a blacksmith that he gained the most renown.

This writer recalls talking with old men in the community who declared that George Rice was so skilled a blacksmith that he could weld a sawblade, polish and finish it so well that one could hardly detect where it had been joined. Many innovations throughout the valley had their origin in George Rice's shop.

In addition, he was reputed to be the best gunsmith in the entire area. He, like his grandson Sill whom he never saw, took pride in his work, and he never released a weapon unless it was as perfect as his hands could create. All parts for the "hog" rifle were handmade in a little shop on Lost Creek a mile below the mill. He used a giant circular stone similiar to a millstone as a fly-wheel or stabilizer for the strong axle which passed through a grind-stone. Here George Rice, as well as his brother-in-law George Snodderly, fashioned bars of steel into gun barrels.³⁴

Since George had other interests, it usually took him about six months to finish a gun. He sold the rifles for forty dollars each, but he often traded the valuable weapon for a tract of land to someone leaving for the West. By so doing, old George accumulated a good deal of land in the Valley.

The rifles made by George Rice were reputed to have been so "dead accurate" that they were prohibited from use in shooting matches. Much of his skill as a gunsmith was attributed to his keen eyesight. This writer remembers hearing many times, from his paternal grandfather, Rev. John G. Irwin, that "old George Rice could see a bullet hole for eighty yards even as an old man." A very few of his old rifles are to be found among the possessions of some of his descendants.³⁵

George Rice sometimes combined his skill as a carpenter and as a blacksmith in building wagons, which were in great demand by those leaving for the West. Probably most of his brothers and cousins secured one of his sturdy vehicles for their trips to Missouri, and some of these old wagons were no doubt driven on to Washington, Oregon, or California.

As indicated earlier, George Rice married Mary Snodderly of the early pioneer family in Big Valley.³⁶ To the union of George and Mary Rice were born seven children, most of whom left for Missouri and other western states.

Sally Longmire Rice, daughter-in-law of George Rice, and mother of Sill, remembered and spoke of George with great respect. There was a great scare, she recalled, near the end of the Civil War, that a Negro uprising would occur, endangering the



SALLY SHARP LONGMIRE

The grandmother of Sill, Sally was the mother of Sarah Longmire Rice who was the wife of George Rice. Sally was the wife of Robert Longmire, the daughter of Conrad Sharp, and the granddaughter of Old Henry Sharp. This Henry Sharp was one of the original five Sharp brothers who first settled Big Valley and built Sharp's Station there on the banks of the Clinch in 1784. Tradition has it that these Sharps came from Scotland via Germany.

lives and property of everyone. Sally recalls that old George, shortly before his death, called the people together to "make a little talk," dispelling their anxiety and greatly alleviating their fears. "He was a good man," she related to Sill, and "one who was well respected and admired by the entire community."

Isolated and peace loving as it was, Big Valley still did not escape completely the effects of the Civil War. Many of the prominent valley farmers had owned a few slaves and sympathized with the South; but at the same time they did not "want to destroy" the Union. Their fathers and grandfathers had fought at Kings Mountain and against the Indians at such places as Old Henry Rice's mill. They fought to gain independence from Britain and to form a nation of their own. They fought the British again in 1812 (some had gone with Andy Jackson to fight the famous battle of New Orleans) in order to remain an independent nation. Despite their sentiments, they could not align themselves with a group intent upon dividing the nation. Hence, almost to the man, they either remained neutral or gave their support to the North. I have talked with many who lived through the war, and some of them have stated that "there were no Confederates in Big Valley."

During the latter part of the war, the Confederates had pushed northward to the vicinity of historically famous Cumberland Gap, and they were attempting to gain possession of this most strategic passageway. Big Valley, being prosperous, and mainly unpillaged by either army, came to be looked upon with favor by the hungry Confederates as a prime source for replenishing their meager supplies.

On one occasion a group of famished "rebels" rode onto the premises of the Rice homestead, demanding food. Although no one except Sally Rice was home, she acted swiftly in heeding their demands. Meanwhile the soldiers had built a roaring fire in the yard and they had placed over this fire a large homemade iron oven. Before the bread was half baked, Sally recalled, the half starved soldiers had emptied the oven, and were demanding more bread. After the meal, they took all the meat from the smokehouse, and one of the soldiers mounted Henry Rice's prized "Black Eagle" horse and rode off.

Henry, the father of Sill, was a silent man, and one of those people who rarely angered; but he was furious when he learned that his most treasured steed had been stolen by a Confederate soldier. Few men would pursue an enemy army to recover a horse

from one of the troops, but Henry did just that. With hardly a word to his wife and family, he started up Big Valley afoot. The features of the horse were so striking that Henry had little trouble in inquiring from the Big Valley farmers as to the course taken by the soldiers. After several days Henry Rice returned, mounted triumphantly upon his fine horse. He said little regarding his experiences, or how he managed to recover the animal; but he did relate that he had located his horse near "far off" Cumberland Gap.

Research leads me to believe that Henry Rice had some cousins in Tazewell and Cumberland Gap. Old James Rice, grandfather of Henry, had a brother, Levi, who lived in that area. It is possible that he received help from his relatives in successfully accomplishing his mission.

Sill recalls that his father later sold this beautiful horse for the handsome sum of two hundred dollars. He accepted a promissory note in lieu of cash for the steed. Some time later the horse returned unmounted to the Rice home. Although Henry had not received payment, he returned the horse to its new "owner"; but he never received a cent for this unusual specimen.

Money was scarce and a system of barter was still in general use in Big Valley when the great war came on. The Rices used hams, shoulders, and side meat to exchange for the few things they had to buy; but the soldiers saw to it that the pork was gone long before it could cure in the old log smokehouse. Henry had a ten dollar gold piece which he was determined not to lose to the Confederacy. Sally Rice told her children years later with amusement, how her husband had retained possession of his gold piece during the war.

With the old hand auger, he had bored a hole deep into a huge poplar log, and fitted the coin into it. He had then driven a wooden peg into the hole. On this peg he hung some worn and ragged clothing (not an unusual custom); and though the soldiers were in the house more than once during the four years of the fighting, the valuable gold piece was still secure in its hiding place when the tired Confederate Army capitulated at Appomattox.

While Henry Rice was quiet and reserved, "Aunt Sarah" was quite talkative. Everyone with whom I talked who knew her remembered her as a most kind, generous person. She cooked for mill patrons almost every day, and boys from miles around often

stopped in the immense kitchen of Sally Rice and ate her pies, hot biscuits, and honey.

The daughter of Robert Longmire, a prominent farmer of Big Valley, Sally had enjoyed her first few weeks of school. Her teacher, jokingly, threatened to "put her under the floor with the panthers." Sally was so frightened at the prospects of such punishment that she was determined never again to face the schoolmaster. Because of the popular notion of the time that education for girls was largely a waste of time, she was allowed to remain home. As a consequence she never learned to read or write. But she was keenly interested in the affairs of the day, and of things past. She often told her children of the "early" days. Most of what Sill Rice knows about the early Rices he attributes to stories related to him by his mother.

Sill remembers her as being a very sentimental woman, given to preserving "old things" in the Bible. Her father had once owned slaves; but after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, they left. Two of the slaves were women, house servants I presume, and they too loaded their belongings on a wheelbarrow, and departed the only home they had ever known. Sally Rice had become very fond of them, and had stated that she thought as much of them as she did her own sisters. It was later learned that they had passed through Cumberland Gap, crossed over Kentucky, and on into Ohio.

Evidently the two servants cherished their home with Robert Longmire. Some twenty years after having left, they returned, and Sally Rice ran to embrace them with great affection.

In the year of 1910, Sally started to cross Big Valley Road as she had done many hundreds of times before. Suddenly she saw a wild, run-away horse upon her; and in her attempt to escape his path she fell, breaking her hip. For thirty-two long months she lay helpless, unable even to turn herself before death relieved her from the protracted suffering.

When George died in 1868, the old mill went to his oldest son Henry, according to the unwritten law of primogeniture; but the shop was left with his son John Rice. When John died many years later, Henry purchased the old blacksmith tools at auction for "the boy," who was thirteen-year-old Sill. Many of these old tools, along with scores of relics of varied descriptions, are still in the possession of Sill today. And although Sill himself is nearing ninety, and the tools are nearly as old as the country itself, Sill may still be seen on occasion in the unpainted

oak shop with the rustic handmade boards, employing the same tools that were used by Old George Rice, his grandfather.

A heavy-set man of medium height, the younger Henry Rice was said to have looked like the "old Rices." "They weren't big people," it has often been said, "but they were awful stout."

Sill recalls Henry, his father, as being a very quiet person, revealing practically nothing of his early years, nor of his forebears. "Most of what I know about the Rices," Sill reiterated, "I got through my mother." Henry Rice attended the one room log school built on a portion of the original Rice tract. Although his total schooling amounted to only a few months, he developed a keen interest in reading whatever printed material that happened to fall into his hands, and he always looked forward to reading the Knoxville paper which he picked up at the Lost Creek post office.

In his older days, when he was not able to continue the strenuous farm labor, he took pleasure in tending the old mill. Unless one has visited such an old water-powered gristmill, has heard the rumbling of the heavy millstone, has smelled the unique odor of the hot meal as it gushes from between the rocks, and has listened to the rushing of the water as it splashes over and powers the giant millwheel, and unless he has heard the moaning and straining of the hickory timbers as they make their endless rounds—unless he has actually visited such a mill, then he cannot understand the satisfying atmosphere which such an environment creates.

Henry kept a large drove of hogs which ran in the woods above the mill, feeding on acorns and other wild things of the forest. He enjoyed calling them in for feeding; and he would watch with profound satisfaction a new litter of pigs, frightened and scrambling among themselves, as they came to the feeding place for the first time. He sold the pigs for one dollar each, regardless of how large the shoat might be.

When the frost of autumn fell thickly on the brown oak leaves which had collected in the corners of the rail fences, and when ice formed irregularly along the bank of Lost Creek, it was hog killing time. It was a day of excitement for everyone, and one which provided plenty of work for all members of the family—and the neighbors too.

There would be a roaring fire throughout the day for an enormous amount of hot water would be needed to scald the hogs. The hog rifles were loaded and were in the best working

order. The powder was dry. The homemade butcher knives were as sharp as razors, and plenty of new gambrel poles had been made from hickory and sassafras saplings.

When the day ended, one could spot huge, dark patches of blood on the corncob-covered ground where the hogs had fed only that morning. All around the scalding barrel the hair from the scraped hogs was piled deep. Ice formed underneath the apple tree where the hogs were hung and washed; and the fire smoldered pleasingly. The hounds from a dozen farms picked from the intestines whatever fat had been overlooked by the women. A fox barked saucily from somewhere on Lone Mountain as the smell of fresh meat reached his sensitive nostrils. Inside the great log smokehouse hundreds of pounds of meat lay covered with salt in the immense wooden trough hewn from a single virgin poplar. From within the kitchen of the old Rice home came the pungent odor of frying sausage, chitterlings, and tenderloin. Hog killing was over.

Often, when patrons were few, Henry would take the rifle which his father had fashioned and retire into the woods to hunt the ever prevalent squirrel. But since he liked to be working—getting something done—he seldom stayed very long. Most of the time he would kill two or three squirrels while a “turn” of corn was grinding. On one occasion, when Henry’s hunting stay became prolonged, his son Rufus decided to go help his aged father kill a “mess” of squirrels. But as he started toward the woodland, Rufe encountered the old man coming in with his old hog rifle and a string of eleven squirrels. He had fired the rifle only ten times.

Although Henry Rice never joined the church, he was always willing to support it in any way. When the week-long association meetings were held, his home would accommodate dozens of visiting worshipers from miles away—even from Kentucky and Southwest Virginia. Every room of the house would be filled with people, sleeping in beds, cots, or on pallets on the floor. The stables would be filled with their horses, and sometimes almost an entire oat crop would be fed to the “association horses.” But Sill recalls that his family seemed to enjoy feeding and boarding the many friends and strangers who came in their wagons to attend the great Baptist Association, held once each year.

In November of 1896 Sill Rice had gone to Missouri himself, when he received a letter from his mother that he must "come home at once if you want to see your father alive. He has taken sick," she wrote her son, and "it looks like he has took sick to die." Enclosed in the letter was twenty dollars for train fare home.

The day after receiving the letter, Sill was making arrangements to leave Western Missouri for his East Tennessee home, a thousand miles away. He stopped to bid his cousin, Frank Rice, farewell, and was told: "It's too late to see your father. I have here a Union County paper, and it says your father has already died and has been buried."

Sill, at the time, was working for and caring for an old man by the name of Thomas Bruce. Upon hearing that young Sill's father had died, the old man wept. He said, "now your father lay dying while you were here waiting on me, a stranger." Since his father was already buried, the old man begged Sill to stay with him a while longer. This he agreed to do.

Sill recalls that his father died in November, 1896, just four days after the first election of President McKinley. Rice Snoderly came by to see Henry, he later told Sill, just after the election, and just before Henry died. He recalled that Henry seemed greatly interested in the results of the election and asked questions concerning the particulars of it. Henry, too, was buried amid the ancient white oaks on the hill with his father George, his grandfather James, and his great-grandfather, old pioneer Henry Rice. The following account of the passing of Henry Rice appeared in the November 12, 1896, edition of the *Union Eagle*.

"A GOOD MAN GONE HOME."

We have just returned home from old "Lost Creek Cemetery" where we consigned to its last resting place the body of one of our oldest and most respected neighbors, Henry Rice, who bade adieu to the scenes of this mortal life, Sunday night, 10 p.m. the 8th inst.

He leaves a truly kind, true, and affectionate companion, who did all that noble woman could to soothe and comfort him during his affliction, together with five daughters and two sons, to mourn his loss.

And although he had never made a public profession of Christianity, nor joined any Church, yet for about 40 years he entertained That Hope, which is an anchor to the soul, in the "Lion of the tribe of Juda." Hence he died in the triumph of a loving faith. It has been the privilege of the writer to have lived a near neighbor to, and intimately acquainted with deceased for more than three score years. And he can and will here say, that Henry Rice was a model man, was moral, modest, honest, truthful, and neighborly, had the



HENRY AND SALLY RICE

Sill's father and mother are shown here as they appeared in 1895. Henry, who operated the old gristmill from the close of the Civil War until 1888, was the great-grandson of Pioneer Henry Rice. Sally Longmire Rice, or "Aunt Sarah," was the daughter of Robert Longmire and Sally Sharp Longmire—both of early Big Valley families.

confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He was born May 22nd 1822, died November 8th 1896. Aged 74 years, 5 months, 16 days.

Sleep on Henry till the Resurrection Morning.

Funeral services conducted by Elder T. W. Baker.

These self reliant pioneers were some of the forebears of Marcellus Moss Rice. It is hoped that our brief consideration of them will assist the reader, in some small measure, to appreciate more fully that part of our American heritage, and that it will give insight for understanding the type man which Sill Rice came to be.

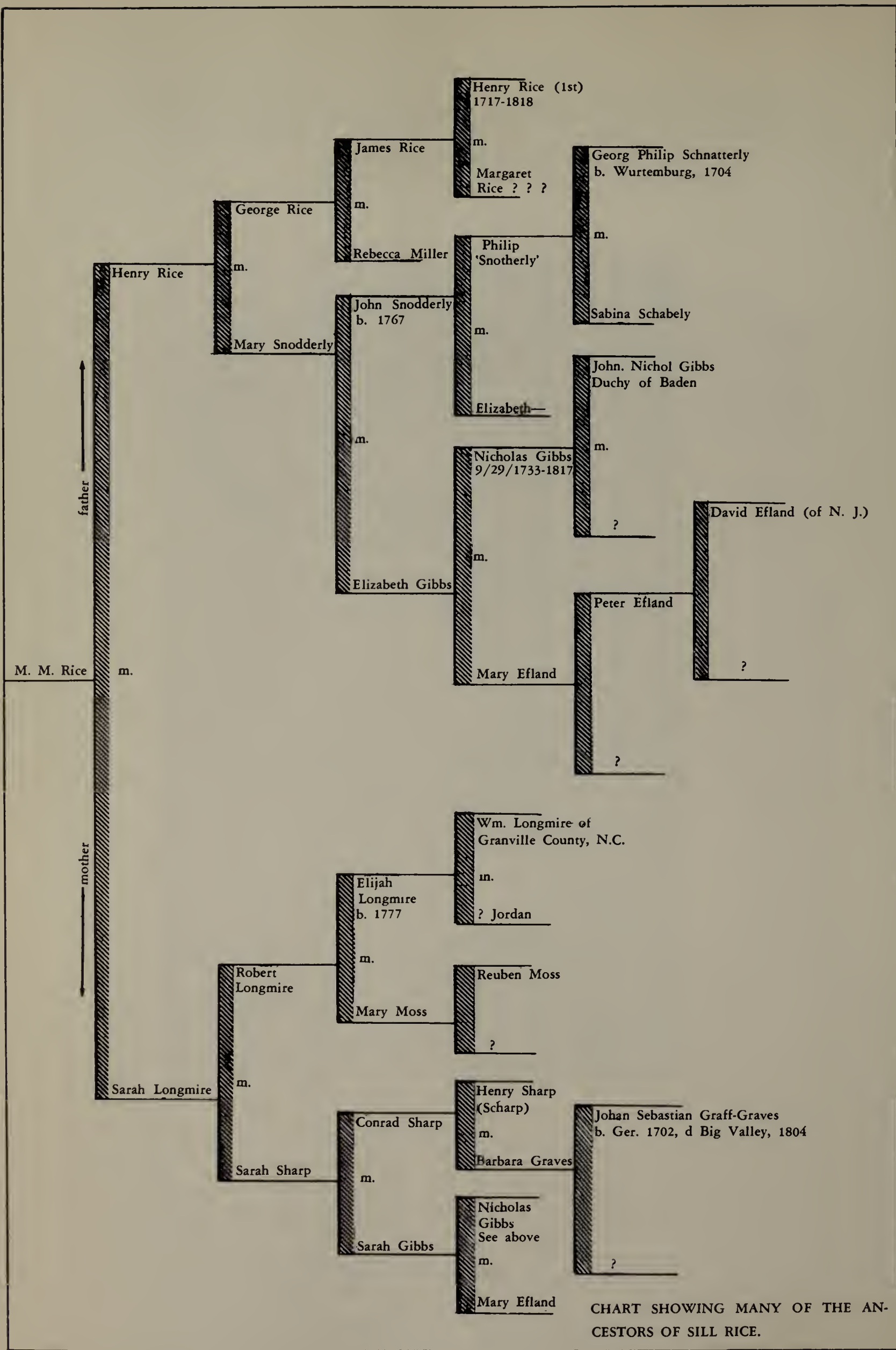


CHART SHOWING MANY OF THE AN-CESTORS OF SILL RICE.

CHAPTER III

As a Boy in Big Valley

Marcellus Moss Rice was born on September 3, 1873, in the old log house built in the wilderness some seventy-five years before by his great-grandfather, James Rice. He was eighth of eleven children, the youngest of two sons. He was given the name Marcellus Moss after two great uncles, Reuben Moss Longmire and Marcellus Longmire; but this cumbersome title was soon to give way simply to Sill.

Sill's first memories center around the old Rice water mill, already looked upon as a sort of family heirloom; and he recalls playing among the towering cedars and in the clear cold water of the millstream on hot days. He remembers watching, with uninterrupted interest, the friendly neighbors and the bearded strangers bringing their "turn" of corn to the old corn mill. He stole close to listen to the stories of war and fighting from old soldiers of the Mexican War and of the Civil War. He heard strange and exciting tales about the wild frontier to the west—he too would some day go to war, and to the West. He would learn what lay beyond Clinch River, and what there was across the distant Cumberland Mountains, and what there was a thousand miles beyond. As a boy he wondered.

The valley life into which young Sill was thrust remained less than a hundred years removed from a vast wilderness, traversed only occasionally even by the savage. The Lost Creek section of Big Valley was over thirty miles from Knoxville, the nearest trading center; hence it is not strange that frontier customs still prevailed, and that the standard of living was determined largely by individual ingenuity and hard work. Even today that portion of Big Valley which is not inundated by Norris Lake is considered to be isolated, even by East Tennessee standards.

Wheat for the morning biscuits was grown and processed by the most primitive methods. Sown by hand, as in Biblical days, the grain required no cultivation until the golden heads, laden with the heavy kernel, pointed toward the ground. The cradling of wheat was considered one of the most strenuous of all jobs. (Even as a boy Sill took great pride in cradling wheat, emulating his brother-in-law, Bob Hankins). The bundles were tied with straw and placed in shocks consisting of a dozen bundles. The shocks were capped with two bundles to turn the water.

Several means of threshing were employed at different times, but one of the first methods employed involved using a flail. The wheat was placed on a sheet or on the puncheon floor of the barn, and was beaten with a long, willowy branch. In this manner the chaff and grain would be "thrashed" from the straw. The grain could then be poured from one container to another on a windy day, and the chaff would be blown away while the heavy grain would fall, unaffected by the wind, back into the container.

Sometimes the grain would be placed on the thick, poplar puncheon floor of the barn in a large room known as the threshing room. Then horses, or oxen, would be driven over the sheaves until all the grain was trampled from the straw. Oats, rye, and barley were often threshed in the same manner.

Down in the creek bottoms where the soil was rich and deep, the cane patches would often be planted. When the first crisp winds of autumn rustled the falling walnut leaves, the colorful process of "making molasses" would commence. Only certain people in the community had a molasses mill (though it consisted only of two iron rollers connected to a long pole drawn by a mule) and there would always be a crowd around the mill. Hour after hour the sad little mule would go 'round and 'round, pulling the long pole which turned the rollers. Underneath the pole, a man would sit and feed the cane stalks into the rollers, and the little mule would make a deep circular path where he trod.

The docile flock of geese was kept on almost every farm, and at the proper times of every year they would be driven to a pen or shed to be plucked of their feathers for the pillows and feather beds. Martin Rice, mentioned earlier, recalled that the Big Valley folk used feathers at one time in lieu of money. When peddlers came around with their wares, the old poet recalled in a letter to Parlon Hill in his old days, pioneer people would trade bags of feathers for whatever they wished to purchase; hence certain items might be priced at so many bags of goose or duck feathers.

The wool from which much of the winter clothing was made came from the little flock of sheep which grazed alongside the cows and oxen on the knobs above the valley. The frugal folk obtained their own lye from wood ashes by means of an ash hopper, and with this they made soap from meat scraps. Cow hides were tanned for use in making shoes and harness for the horses. Ground hog and squirrel hides were tanned by burying

them in wood ashes. These hides were cut into narrow strips and used to mend harness and to make shoestrings for the brogans.

Sill recalls watching his father "make fire" with two pieces of flint and a ball of cotton. But it was seldom that the fire ever died in the wide stone fireplace; and when it did, some member of the family was dispatched to a neighbor's house to fetch some hot hickory coals. "I've trotted out to a neighbor's to get fire on a cold morning," Sill said.

Indeed, there was a way and a means for accomplishing all necessary tasks; and as Sill grew from boyhood to manhood, he would learn how to hew a log, to drive the oxen, to make a plowpoint in the blacksmith shop, to dress a beef, and to make furniture for the home. He would learn to do something of a hundred different trades, and he would learn the soil and how to cultivate it for maximum production. What was even more important he would learn those qualities that build an undaunted character—qualities prerequisite to becoming a good soldier, citizen, neighbor, and father.

This was the environment into which Marcellus Moss Rice was born: Big Valley—a land of proud, independent people—honest, friendly, and accommodating.

"I can remember," Sill recalled at the age of 89, "a man by the name of Langford who came from Knoxville to help rebuild the old mill. We had had a bad storm in the Valley and the mill had been damaged." While staying at the Rice home and helping with this task, Langford became interested in the many Indian graves found about the Rice farm. The old man had read in books, he said, where the Indians buried their valuables with them. Also, the old settlers had always heard it said that the Indians, upon leaving Big Valley, had boasted that there was enough gold in the area to shoe their horses.

Hence, the graves which had lain undisturbed since the red man left the valley almost a hundred years before were soon to be invaded by the prying hands of a fortune seeker. Sill, still of pre-school age, watched every detail as the stone piles were dismantled and the excavation began. One grave which Sill remembers in particular was located in a field not far from the mill. It had been clearly marked by a heap of stones; and although

the settlers had always recognized it as an Indian grave, they not only had refrained from tearing into it, but they had carefully plowed and cultivated around it for almost a century.

A large Indian skeleton was found sitting upright in the grave, the head about the level of the ground. A large portion of the skull was missing, and it was speculated that the Indian had been killed in battle. As the skeleton was lifted from its resting place, one of the teeth dropped out. Sill never forgot one of the spectators, a man named George Goins, picking up the tooth and putting it in his mouth where one of his own teeth was missing, declaring, "This is where that tooth belongs."

All through the rocky cedar glades these men uncovered Indian graves, all of which were marked by piles of limestone. In some instances the skeletons of infants were discovered, sometimes several in one grave. Tradition has it that the Indians had lived, at least during the summer, on the land taken up by old Henry Rice. The story handed down indicates that these Indians, living in temporary wigwams, had been driven out by other Indians, possibly the Shawnee. Martin Rice, nephew of Sill Rice (not to be confused with poet Martin Rice) recorded what the older settlers of the area had told him. "There was a little Indian village," he has written, "consisting of wigwams on the land later claimed by the Rices. They had moved only a year or two before the Whites started coming into the valley."

One day Sally Rice and her daughters sat on the long front porch of the old log house spinning and weaving. Three-year-old Sill, miffed by the lack of attention he was getting, ordered his mother to bring him some cornbread and onion from the kitchen. Realizing the child was not really hungry, Sally ignored her young son's command. Sill, in bitter retaliation announced: "I'll just go lay down and die." He lay down on the end of the porch in the shade of the sprawling grapevine.

For several minutes the three-year-old lay still as death, listening with impatient expectancy for the sound of his mother's feet. But she did not come to see about him. Neither did any of his sisters. Finally, in desperation, Sill got up and wandered sheepishly back to where the women worked busily. "I thought you were going to lay down and die," Sally chided. "Oh," little Sill said, "I couldn't die in this old linsey-woolsey dress."

At the age of seven, the first Monday in August, 1881, Sill attended his first school some two miles west of the home. Known as the Witt school, the building was a simple twenty foot log

structure, covered with hand-split boards. The school term was only three months out of the year, during which time reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic were emphasized — occasionally history and geography were added. He has vivid recollections of "the old Blue Back Speller" and McGuffey's Reader.

His first teacher was one Mit Stout, followed the second year by his first cousin James Longmire.¹ After two years Longmire left, and Freeman Miller became the schoolmaster. Miller, who was from the "ridge country," later became sheriff of Union County before leaving for Oklahoma where he tried for and received a government claim about 1889. He later returned to Union County, near Lutrell, where he died.

Charlie Claiborne from Powell Valley (probably Claiborne County) taught the next term of school, followed by Jack Woodson from the Powell River Ridges. It was from Mr. Woodson that Sill received his first whipping for "something he didn't do."

No grades were given, and the students were allowed to advance from one reader to the other as rapidly as the teacher thought advisable. With sixty or seventy students in the room, and only one teacher for the several grades, the educational opportunities were necessarily poor. Nevertheless, young Sill advanced to the "fifth reader," and developed a strong interest in history and geography—an interest which he still possesses and pursues with immense enthusiasm. His knowledge of these subjects far exceeds that of many college graduates.

Sill spent many delightful hours with children his own age walking to and from this humble schoolhouse. The path led through the fields and woods and meandered around the orchards of late apples, by turnip patches, near muscadine vines, and in view of different varieties of wild grapes. Each day they witnessed the busy activities of the congenial valley farmers harvesting the summer's bounty, storing it for the winter.

There was a very large cave not far from the school house known as the "sweet potato cave." This cave had been used, from the time of the early settlers, as a place for storing sweet potatoes and various types of vegetables. The entrance consisted of a deep vertical hole in the ground and was entered by means of a tall tree, which, when cut, was dropped into the opening, enabling the farmers to climb up and down on the limbs.

Sometimes the more adventurous boys would steal away from the other children and, with pine torches in hand, climb into this frightening, but mysteriously luring cave. There was an im-



THE OLD RICE MILL AS IT APPEARS TODAY

Built in the wilderness by James Rice in 1798, this old gristmill was operated by the Rices in Big Valley until 1935—almost a century and a half. When TVA flooded the valley in that year, they moved the old relic to a site just below Norris Dam. Host to millions of visitors from the world over, this ancient symbol of the past has possibly been photographed as often as any tourist attraction in the state.

mense room at the bottom which seemed to go on and on in either direction. There were hugh wooden boxes containing potatoes, cabbage, and turnips, each labled with the initials of the family to whom they belonged. Hundreds of yards from the entrance the boys found the names of their fathers and grandfathers who had themselves explored this cave in their youth and had written their names in the soft soapstone.

Soon after the school started, the forest shone forth in a thousand different hues, and even these carefree children took note of the beauty of Big Valley with Lone Mountain standing watch, as some protecting sentinel. The frost sweetened the persimmons, the black haws, the possum grapes, and the summer grapes; and it was only when the hard, snowy freezes of winter came that the forest and countryside did not furnish an afternoon snack for the hungry school children.

Of his early school mates, Sill sadly relates, only one, Aunt "Sissy" Irwin, is living. "Only when I knew her," Sill reflects in a kindly voice, "she was Louisa Witt. She lives in Andersonville with her daughter. I hear she is in awful bad health."

Life was not always pleasant and serene at the colorful log home on Lost Creek. Sickness and death were frequent visitors. Sally Rice had watched several of her sisters die of "consumption," and when her daughter, Matilda, contracted tuberculosis, the mother could do little more than comfort her to the end. One day Matilda managed to sit up in a rocking chair, and she asked to be carried down to the picturesque old mill "once more."

Sill recalls, as a small boy, watching his older sisters carry the nineteen year old girl down the narrow path through a cornfield to the side of a hill where they placed her in full view of the quaint old gristmill. Here she watched in thoughtful silence the patrons coming and going to the moss-covered mill which sat beneath the tall grove of cedars. Her eyes followed the immense wheel as it turned 'round and 'round with no deviation.

Blue against the horizon towered the Cumberlands in the distance; and on the hill closer by, there were the distinct silhouettes of the great white oaks in the cemetery, where she must have known that she soon would be laid to rest. With misty eyes and tiring breath Matilda Rice asked her sisters to carry her back to the rambling log house. She died the following day.

Manervia soon followed her sister to the grave, and later Tiny died of typhoid at the age of fourteen. Neacie died at thirteen of the same disease.

Four times Sally Rice had followed the slow funeral procession to the cemetery and stood in the grove of trees as the solemn crowd sang "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," and "Amazing Grace." The heart of this sentimental woman broke as the sad chords of these old songs echoed in the little ravines at the foot of Lone Mountain, and then ceased altogether. The neatly finished handmade wooden casket was lowered into the ground and Sally and Henry Rice went back to their saddened home.

At fourteen Sill quit school to become the plowman for the family. His older brother Rufus was herding cattle in far off Montana, and his father was kept busy tending the mill. Although the total tenure of his formal education had been less than twenty-four months, he loved the soil and preferred farming to attending school. Very early in life he developed a desire to own some land of his own.

To operate a farm of this size was quite a responsibility for a slender youth of fourteen. The labor was never-ending. The staple crop in that period was corn; for, not only was it prepared in a number of ways for human consumption but it was also the chief feed for fattening the hogs, beeves, and lambs. It was often cultivated with the primitive type "bull-tongue" plow, and much of the closer cultivation had to be done with the hoe.

"My daddy had a little eighty acre farm about a mile up the creek from the old home," Sill said. "And in the spring of the year he would leave the old mill and take a bull tongue up to that eighty acre tract to break up some corn land. There was a little one room log house where my daddy had set up house-keeping, and there was a little pole stable on the place, and there were big red gullies where the land had been corned too much.

"Well, we would all take our hoes up there in the hot summer time and chop the saw briars and crab grass out of the corn. And in the fall Mother and me and the little girls would walk up there with ropes to carry fodder back home. We would all tie as many bundles of fodder on our backs as we could carry, and the girls would stumble and fall, but they would get up and start again. We had an old blind bay mare, but we didn't have a wagon in running order. We finally sold the old sorrel to a band of gypsies. Those were hard times and everybody worked."

As was customary for that period, almost all items used by the Rice family were of their own ingenuity. Countless items which today we acquire at a nominal cost were then obtained only by great difficulty, skill, and hard labor.

The spinning of the wool into thread became the prodigious task of the women. When the cows were milked; the butter churned; the fruit, berries, and beans gathered and dried; and when the cooking and baking was done—there was always the spinning and weaving. Under the protective shade trees in the hot summer months, and on the huge front porch of the old log house in the cooler autumn months, the spinning and weaving went on and on. "I can remember," Sill injected, "Mother and my sisters' spinning thread hour after hour. It just seemed like they never stopped," he added. "I was eighteen years old before I ever wore anything but home-made clothing."

Shoes also were largely a product of their own making. Sill remembers that one Francis Witt had become a sort of official shoemaker for the community. The price for tanning the leather and making the shoes was about \$1.60. Necessarily crude, this type shoe would fit either foot.

About the time Sill quit school, he undertook to haul a load of corn to Andersonville for his brother-in-law, Robert Hankins. In Big Valley, corn was bringing twenty-five cents a bushel; in Andersonville it was ten cents higher. Hankins had promised to let young Sill buy himself a French harp, a Jew's harp, and a barlow knife at the store in Andersonville. Hankins was a good harp player. "He always played as he walked up and down the road going to and from his job." Sill wanted to be able to play the way he did.

Sill told the story with clarity and vividness as he sat close to his kitchen stove. Wood and coal were piled around the stove, and the general appearance of the cozy kitchen was that it had been lived in for Sill is his own housekeeper. In a moment of silence one could hear the little branch down by the springhouse. It rushed over the great limestone ledges, and on into the cold dark night toward Bull Run Creek which served as the western border of Sill's farm. Sometimes he would close his eyes because of the overhead electric light, but his story went on. His recollection for details was always a source of wonder for me.

"It was one week before Christmas in 1887. It was snowing a little, and there was mush ice in the river. My oldest sister, Becky Hankins, was sitting with me on the springboard of the wagon, and she carried a three month old baby with her. She wanted to do some trading in Andersonville.

"When we come to the river, Brice Longmire, my cousin, was there running the ferry. He and my brother Rufe owned the

ferry. The river was up. It was awfully full and swift; and when Longmire brought the ferry to the bank, he did not chain it, but said he could hold it. 'Drive on,' he hollered, 'drive 'er on, Dicky.'

"Well, I was just a boy," Sill continued, "but I knowed it looked dangerous. I told my sister with the baby to wait on the bank until the wagon was on the ferry.

"Just as I started on, the mule stubbed up, but the blind mare went on, pulling the mule and wagon. The ferry was already slipping away from the bank, and the hind wheels of the wagon were not yet on the ferry. I did everything I could to urge the team on, but they just couldn't pull that wagon load of corn on the boat. The coupling pole was hung on the floor of the ferry.

"Well, finally the wagon rolled off backwards, pulling the team into the river. The mule came off on top of the mare, and I was still in the spring seat. I was still trying to save that load of corn; but the water was over ten feet deep, and the team was so tangled up in the chains and harness that they could not do anything.

"Old Dr. Smoot was watching from the opposite bank, along with several men and boys. He kept hollering for me to jump and save myself. I could see that the wagon was about to turn over, and I jumped off—just throwed the check lines in the water, and swimmied to the bank.

"The wagon come uncoupled and the team turned around and swimmied back to the bank, but it was so steep and growed up in bushes that we could not get them out. They just hung their front feet on the bank and waited while Jim Witt went to get an ax to cut them out. Some of the boys jumped into their boats and went down the river and pulled the wagon parts to the bank. Old Uncle Will Loy, a blacksmith, brought a long pole with a hook on the end, and some of the boys helped fish out the bags of corn. I had twenty bushels, and we got it all except two bushels.

"There were fifteen men and boys," Sill recalls proudly, "who came to help that day. Ordinarily," he stresses, "there would not have been more than one or two at the ferry; but this was a few days before Christmas," he pointed out, "and they were hanging around the storehouse. John Loy and the same Brice Longmire ran the store.

"Everyone of those boys are dead now, I believe. Yes, I read in the papers a few weeks ago where Scott Loy died. Scott was the last of those boys. The Watson boys are all dead; and the Snodderly brothers, and Tom Sharp, and Jim Witt. You knowed Jim."

Sill often went with Robert Hankins to Coal Creek (now Lake City) to sell eggs, molasses, butter, potatoes, and meal from the old mill. "Hankins knew the miners in Coal Creek, and we got a better price than we could have got in Knoxville for our produce." On these trips, and on trips to Knoxville, the Big Valley folk would spend the night with some acquaintance along the way. Nothing unusual was thought of putting up the team and spending the night with even a total stranger, and there was seldom mention of a lodging fee. Hadn't the Rice home served host to literally hundreds of travelers, be they relatives, neighbors, or total strangers?

"My mother traded at different stores because some would have better prices they paid for eggs. Sometimes they would bring six cents and sometimes they would bring seven cents a dozen. Most of the time I would go with her, carrying a half bushel of meal which we would sell. We would go to Hill's store, or sometimes to Fate Kincaid's store, and we would have to cross Clinch River in a boat. Sometimes we would go to Meyers' store, or to Lewis Loy's store. She saved all her money to buy things she wanted for the house.

"One time my father and Rufe took a wagon load of butter, eggs, corn and potatoes to Knoxville," Sill stated. "And Rufe drove a bull and a fat cow which we had fattened on cane seed. It was thirty-two miles one way, and the trip took two full days. My mother had ordered a stove. Nobody ever thought of such a thing; but my mother had set her head to it and she got it. A little step stove, they called it. It cost nine dollars, and was the second one that we knowed anything about in the whole valley. The first one that we ever heard of was bought by Preacher Tom Weaver." Many years later Sill Rice was to marry the oldest daughter of Thomas Weaver.

At fifteen Sill decided to become a miner. He went with his brother-in-law, Robert Hankins, to the nearby mines of Anderson County. It was customary in these mines for each miner, along with one "buddy" to have his own "room." He would start digging a small hole off a main artery of a mine and for years work back into the mountain. When Sill joined his brother-in-

law, they were some three miles in the dark, dripping mine. A wooden track extended the entire distance upon which ran a small wooden car which, upon being filled, would be pulled out of the mountain by a tiny mule. The roof was scarcely four feet high with an occasional timber holding the mountain from the lonely miner's head. At the end of this long narrow passage lay the two miners on the cold damp slate, digging relentlessly into the rich vein of coal. Black powder was a useful expedient, but it did not eliminate the strenuous labor. It is impossible for anyone to appreciate the plight of the miner unless he has visited him at his work, miles from the light of day. The long, narrow passage which connects him with the outside world, and with life, is sometimes no more than three feet in height; and even then it is supported by twisting, splintering timbers.

The miner, with the help of the buddy and his mule, could make as much as five dollars in a ten hour workday, but this was unusual. Since the mountain was honeycombed with dozens of such burrows, the danger of a slate fall-in was always extremely imminent, and hundreds of miners were trapped or crushed far under the mighty Cumberland Mountains with no wife or mother to give comfort. In one mine disaster in Anderson County over a hundred miners perished.

During this period an increasing amount of convict labor was being used. Convicts were housed in stockades by the mine owners, and worked at a nominal cost. This, of course, was highly displeasing to the miners, and steps were taken to eliminate this convict labor. When legal resources failed, the miners, faced with substantially lower pay, or the outright loss of their jobs, started freeing the convict-miners by the hundreds. At the Coal Creek Mines, however, the state had dispatched the state militia; and when the miners attempted to free the prisoners there, they were blocked by the state troops. The encounters which followed came to be known as the "Coal Creek War." Sill Rice had dreamed of having a mining room and a buddy of his own; but in face of the uncertain situation, the fifteen year old lad returned to his father's farm in Union County. "We could hear the shooting clear into Union County," Sill recalled.

As Sill grew older, and as the winter months offered some relief from the pressing chores of the farm, he began to cast about for means of supplementing his income. He had heard that some loggers in the area paid "good" for taking a raft of logs to Chattanooga. He became interested.

Some of the finest oak and poplar timber in the country came from the fertile moist valleys of East Tennessee, but there was no good market for it closer than Chattanooga. It was about one hundred fifty miles the way the crow flew, but by the meandering course of the river it was said to be five hundred miles. Although a railroad had at that time been built between Knoxville and Chattanooga, it was certainly not profitable as a means of transporting such items as logs. The river, on the other hand, afforded a free access.

Sill was soon to learn that every mile of the trip was cold, treacherous, and lonely. An ordinary "double raft" consisted of four hundred giant logs secured together by wooden pegs placed through a long hickory pole and into each individual log. Two oarsmen on the front of the raft and two in the rear were required to work in careful co-ordination to keep the raft from running on a mudbank or sandbar, or from following the swift current into a bank. The steersman of the raft had to know every foot of the five hundred miles down the Clinch and Tennessee Rivers, and he had to possess extraordinary strength and endurance.

Cooking was done on a pile of dirt or sand thrown on the raft, and a small shelter was built in the center of the raft where the men might retreat temporarily from the cold wind and rain. The food consisted of side meat, corn bread or biscuits, and coffee made from the muddy river water. The owner of the logs furnished the food. Sill ate little on these trips because of his meatless diet.

It was customary, when the raft went from the Clinch into the Tennessee River, to run throughout the first night. "The owner of the logs always asked, 'Does anybody care (object) to run tonight,' and of course," Sill grinned, "none of them would say anything." This would mean that the men would go for two full days and one night with no sleep and little rest. One cannot visualize the stamina, rigor, and sheer drive required to perform such grueling physical labor for thirty-five unbroken hours.

Once Sill was on a raft when it was torn asunder by the raging currents, and the men barely escaped with their lives. The raft was partially mended, but "Snodgrass of Chattanooga," who owned the mill, had to send someone to rescue them.

On the coldest days the men were often drenched and the raft was covered with ice so that they could hardly stand up to man their oars. The trip took at least seven days. The owner of

the logs bought their train ticket back to Knoxville, and paid them five dollars.

"I made two or three trips down the river," Sill said, "but it was awfully hard on a man. And there were some awful rough men on these rafts. I decided that I would rather work as a farmhand for thirty-five cents a day." Although Sill was just reaching manhood, he had already had experience as a farmer, miner, and logger. East Tennessee with all its mountain scenery and rustic beauty was not a land of glowing opportunities in the early 1890's.

CHAPTER IV

Off to Missouri and Back Again

Big Valley was beautiful, rustic, and friendly; but to a youth of twenty-one it was also secluded and lonely. It was hot and still and forsaken in the cornfield in July, and the day was never-ending. The lonesome drone of a bee added to the feeling of futility; the only other sound was the distant call of a crow, perched watchfully in a dead chestnut tree at the far end of the field. Twenty miles to the west towered the Cumberland Mountains, their splendor enhanced by the glassy heat waves rising mysteriously from the freshly plowed soil.

Contrasted to the monotony of this life was the exciting lure of the West, tugging always at a young man's fancy. No other word spelled romanticism and adventure as did "The West." So many of Sill's relatives had gone there that it seemed almost the thing for a young man to do.

Sill was further encouraged by statements in a letter from the aged poet Martin Rice in Western Missouri. "If any of your young men there," he had written, "would prefer work and good wages to going to school, as some are doing here, they can get from fifteen to twenty dollars a month to come here and help gather the large crop of corn and do other work (for wages) the prosperous times enables the farmers to pay. Things are not as they were when I was a boy and wanted work."

Although his mother begged and pleaded unendingly, Sill had already decided that he would head for the land of the horizon. The year was 1895, and his boyhood was over.

"I had become twenty-one," Sill said, "and the custom was for a boy to make his own way when he reached that age. I told my mother that I had decided to go to Missouri—I very seldom talked with my father, but Mother told him I was planning to go."

Sally Rice returned from talking with her husband and told Sill, "your daddy said he would hire you to work here on the farm if you would stay. He'll pay you wages just like you was a stranger."

But Sill had decided he must go west. "I want to see that old poet Martin Rice," he told his mother. "I don't guess that I'd have ever gone if it hadn't been for wanting to see him."

Sally Rice reluctantly gave up the idea of keeping her son at home. "At least," she said, "you'll have some folks out there."

"What did your father say about your leaving home?" I asked.

"Oh, I never talked it over with him," Sill admitted. "He never talked much. Mother was the talker, and I took it up from her. The last time I ever saw my father was the morning I left for Missouri. He had been down the road talking to a neighbor. I was leaving home in a wagon with Worth Hill and saw him at a distance coming up the road. I don't think he wanted to see me go, but I guess he hated to say anything."

Sill arrived in Harrisonville, county seat of Cass County, Missouri, on the 25th day of July, 1895. "I walked five miles out to where my cousin Frank Rice lived, and that afternoon we started hauling flax seed." He added in explaining, "they raised a great sight of flax out there and used the seed to make linseed oil."

"I worked for about three months for my board, but later Frank paid me three cents a bushel for gathering and shucking corn. I gathered in twenty-three hundred bushel that winter."

In response to a question concerning the weather, he replied, "Oh, it was cold sometimes. It got down to three degrees below zero, but I worked right on. I hauled the corn to an old farmer who had three carloads of Texas longhorns he was feeding. It was eight miles away and I would tie the check lines around my waist, hold onto the tail-gate and run most of the way. I had the team going in a good fast trot.

"But I still got my feet froze," Sill added. "My heels and the sides of my feet got frostbit, and they burned and itched for twenty years. I tried doctoring them with linseed oil; then I got to using Raleigh's liniment. I think that cured them."

Sill paused a moment as if he were trying to recapture the harshness of those days, and his own determination. "I just thought that I would never get warm again. Sometimes I thought I would freeze and drop off in the snow. But I didn't stop. I kept pulling corn as long as I could see. My old hands would crack open," and at this point he held up his gnarled hands, "and they would bleed on raw windy days. I guess that's why they're so twisted up today."

Sill spent the fall and most of the winter gathering corn; and when he finished with this tremendous task, he helped his cousin operate a corn grinding machine which they transported

from farm to farm. The ground corn was used as cattle feed, and was more palatable than whole kernel. Sill explained: "The farmers would buy those old poor Texas Longhorn cattle at Dodge City, or Abilene, or Hays City, and fatten them up on corn. And those wild Texas cowboys—after they sold their cattle, they would just as soon tear the town apart as not. They had some famous lawmen like Bat Masterson and Bill Tilghman to help keep order. Bill Tilghman was a great friend of Teddy Roosevelt," Sill rambled, "and I imagine that's how he got appointed U. S. Marshal—you know the President makes the appointments. He claimed to have killed more buffalo than Buffalo Bill. He was finally killed in Oklahoma City. That's how they settled their affairs out there then. I finally got me a gun."

In the spring Sill went to work for Sam Rice, brother to Frank. There were two other brothers, George and Paris, all sons of John Rice, older brother of Sill's father Henry. They migrated from Tennessee to Missouri at different times; but John himself died in Tennessee.

About a month after arriving in Missouri, Sill went with his three cousins up to the little town of Lone Jack where a large number of people were attending a convention commemorating the Civil War battle fought there. As Sill and his companions approached, they saw the venerable poet, Martin Rice, on the platform delivering the address. "He didn't know me," Sill stated, "but when he saw Frank and Sam, he raised his hand and saluted them."

Sill again visited the old pioneer on the last day of the year, 1895. It was below zero, and they all sat close to the fire as old Martin quizzed his young cousin about Big Valley and Lost Creek. Martin Rice himself was born and lived on Lost Creek until he was eighteen when he went to Missouri and became a pioneer, public servant, and poet laureate of Jackson County.

Sill recalls that the aged man, who lived with his daughter and son-in-law, searched the apple barrel until he found himself a mellow apple, and then placed it on the stove to bake. After a while the apple commenced sputtering and started rocking back and forth. "There Grandpa," said his son-in-law, "there is the perpetual motion that you are always studying about."

"Oh, yes," the kindly old man replied, "but you take the fire out of the stove and let it cool, and you'll see what happens to the perpetual motion." Sill recalls that old Martin Rice then predicted that perpetual motion was one of the very few things

which he had decided was impossible for man to accomplish.

Martin Rice had taken some apple seed from Tennessee to Missouri when he went there by wagon in 1832. From these few seed he had developed a successful nursery which supplied apple seedlings to hundreds of other farmers. He was interested in mathematics and wrote a textbook on the subject, but he was best known for his large volume of prose and poetry.¹ One of his poems, *The Soldier from the Kansas Line*, was set to music and became a well known ballad throughout the Midwest. This poem was written about his younger brother, Pryor, who was killed during the Civil War at Corinth, Mississippi.

Many of his poems were written about his memories of Lost Creek and Big Valley. He always retained the keenest interest in his birthplace, and corresponded with friends until his death. On the cold night which Sill spent with him, he finally retired to his own private little room, which was also warmly heated by a stove, and asked Sill to come with him. There he continued to ask questions about things back in Tennessee.

After making a crop for Sam Rice, Sill got a job with an old Pennsylvania Dutch farmer named Jerry Bricker. Bricker had been in Missouri twenty-seven years, Sill recalled, and owned some seven or eight farms. "He had two hundred acres of timothy hay to put up, and this was the main reason he hired me. It was right up to your chin," Sill gestured by rubbing a gnarled hand across his unshaven chin, "and I'll tell you, Rice, there wasn't a weed in it."

While working for Bricker and his son, cutting and stacking this hay, Sill would be up before day to feed the horses and the two hundred head of hogs. After working for ten hours in the hay, his chores of feeding the livestock would be repeated in the evening. The frugal German paid Sill only fourteen dollars per month and his board. "We never stopped work except to eat a bit, or to get a drink of water. No boys of today would, or could, work like that on those hot days. They're just not used to it. But I wanted to make enough money to buy me a little piece of land. I didn't care what kind of old poor land it was; I just wanted to own it myself."

As autumn neared, Sill had completed most of the work on the Bricker farm; and when the son of the older Bricker came



SILL RICE AT 23—CASS COUNTY, MISSOURI

When Sill finished the season's work for old Jerry Bricker, he went into Harrisonville to look for work—and just before he got a job with Wesley Bruce, he had this photograph made for his mother. The date was September 24, 1896.

in from operating a new type haybaler which his brother had invented, the young Tennessean was told that there was no more work for him. The Brickers seemed well pleased with Sill's work, and they insisted that he stay with them until he found other work. But Sill left immediately to seek work in Harrisonville.

He had no sooner arrived in town than he was approached by a stranger who slapped him on the shoulder and asked if his name was Rice. "I just talked with Tom Bricker this morning, and he told me that you were the man I am looking for," the stranger stated. "My father is partly paralyzed and needs someone to be with him constantly. Bricker said you were a fine young man who never smoked, chewed, drank, or swore. Said you would be ideal to take care of my father."

At first Sill flatly declined. "I told him that I was just an awkward farm hand and knew nothing about waiting on a sick man." But, Sill continued, "He just insisted that I try it for just a few days. Well, I finally said 'I'll try it.' Now, the man's name was Wesley Bruce; and his father, the man I was to care for, was an old pioneer by the name of Thomas Bruce. This was in September, 1896."

During the day, Wesley Bruce kept a horse harnessed in the stable, and a buggy handy in case the old man wanted to take a drive. The doctors had recommended that he be driven about the countryside, "and it did help him," Sill believed. "We would drive over his prosperous farm, and up to Pleasant Hill, and to Harrisonville, and out to the west, sometimes, to Coleman on the high prairie. We would pick up the mail and buy a few groceries. Oh, I enjoyed seeing the country like that. It wasn't work."

Thomas Bruce had taken up a claim in Cass County many years before the Civil War and had built an impressive stone house from his own quarry. He told Sill of the early days, the wild lawless years, when the James boys and other outlaws roamed the area.

One story of particular interest to Sill concerned Quantrill's gang and the James boys. Quantrill, the infamous Civil War leader, started out with a guerilla band ostensibly devoted to the cause of the South; but before the war was over and continuing after the war, the group degenerated into an army of cut-throats and outlaws who used the war as an excuse for killing, looting and stealing. This group included both Frank and Jesse James at one time, and other members of the future James' boys.

The second morning after Quantrill had burned Lawrence,

Kansas, and killed some two hundred people in cold blood, two vile looking characters appeared at the home of Thomas Bruce. They told of the "sacking of Lawrence" and admitted they had been members of Quantrill's gang; but they claimed that they had despaired of the wantonness, killings, and wholesale murders. They had deserted, they said. A large amount of money had been buried by the Quantrill gang on the Bruce farm, they said, and they demanded shovels and other tools to recover this gold.

The following day Bruce went to the back of this farm and found his tools beside a large flat stone which had been turned upright. But underneath this stone lay another flat stone which had not been molested. Whether Quantrill and his men had actually buried gold there, he never knew. And if it had been buried there, Bruce did not know whether it had been recovered by the two dirty, unshaven men who came for that purpose.

One day the young son of Wesley Bruce came home on a visit from a Kansas City Business School. After discussing the matter with Sill, the two young men decided to have a look underneath this second flat stone for themselves. Taking up where Quantrill's men had left off, they drove a steel bit through the rock at the floor of the excavation. They blasted the stone out with black powder, but found no gold.

"I never told the boys back home that I helped dig for Jesse James' gold," Sill confided. "They might have thought that I was sort of making it up. But we did look for it," he chuckled a little. "We dug for Jesse's gold.

"One night after I got old Mr. Bruce in bed," Sill stated, "his son Wesley came in and said 'Rice, come in and sit by our fire.' Well," continued Sill, "I went in and sat down and watched Wesley clean his gun—a Smith and Wesson."

"I got that gun off an Indian in Oklahoma," volunteered Wesley Bruce.

"Have you been in Oklahoma?" asked Sill.

"Oh, yes" smiled Bruce, "that's where I found my wife, Ada Dalton."

Sill, displaying his typical interest in people, mentioned that he had known some Daltons from Sevier County, near Knoxville. "Are you related to the Daltons of Tennessee?" Sill inquired.

"Yes," Mrs. Bruce replied, "that's where my mother and father were from; but we were all born in the Indian territory of

Oklahoma—my five brothers and me.” At this point there was silence. Mrs. Bruce fumbled with her handkerchief, and Sill noticed tears in her eyes. Then Wesley Bruce asked Sill, “Did you ever hear of the Dalton boys who were shot down, along with other members of their gang, as they started to rob the bank in Coffeyville, Kansas?”

“Why, yes,” Sill remembered quickly. “I read about it back in Tennessee and heard a good deal of talk about it. I’ve heard a lot about the Dalton Boys.”

In a moment Mrs. Bruce regained her composure and startled Sill when she said: “They were my brothers. Mother and Father tried to bring them up right, but they got with the wild cowboys and Indians, and they became wild, too. Two of my brothers were killed after they were ambushed and had their horses shot from under them in Coffeyville. The third one was shot several times, but managed to escape into the country. He asked to be admitted to a farmhouse, but was refused. He was told that he might rest in the barn. When the posse caught up with him, they demanded that he throw down his gun and come out. He told them that he would fight the whole bunch of them if they would put down their guns. But they insisted that he come out.

“He was full of bullets and knew that he would soon die,” Mrs. Bruce sadly stated, “so he just walked out and shot himself through the head before the posse. Yes,” Mrs. Bruce said softly, “the Dalton Boys were my brothers.”

Sill recalled a later visit paid the Bruce home by a Frank Dalton of Oklahoma. Mrs. Bruce referred to him as “Uncle” Frank. “I just never had the heart to talk to Mrs. Bruce about the Daltons any more,” Sill said. “She was one of the kindest women I ever knew.”

It was at this time that Sill received a letter from his mother informing him that his father was ill. She enclosed some money for his trip back home and warned that he had better hurry if he wished to see his father alive. It was while Sill made plans to return home that he learned of his father’s death and burial; and he was persuaded by Thomas Bruce to stay with him a while longer. But he knew his mother and sisters needed him; and as soon as the month was up, he left for Tennessee. He later learned that Mr. Bruce lived only three weeks after he left.

Traveling through Missouri, Mississippi and northern Alabama, Sill arrived in Knoxville on December 12, 1896. There at the livery station he encountered Robert Sharp and his cousin

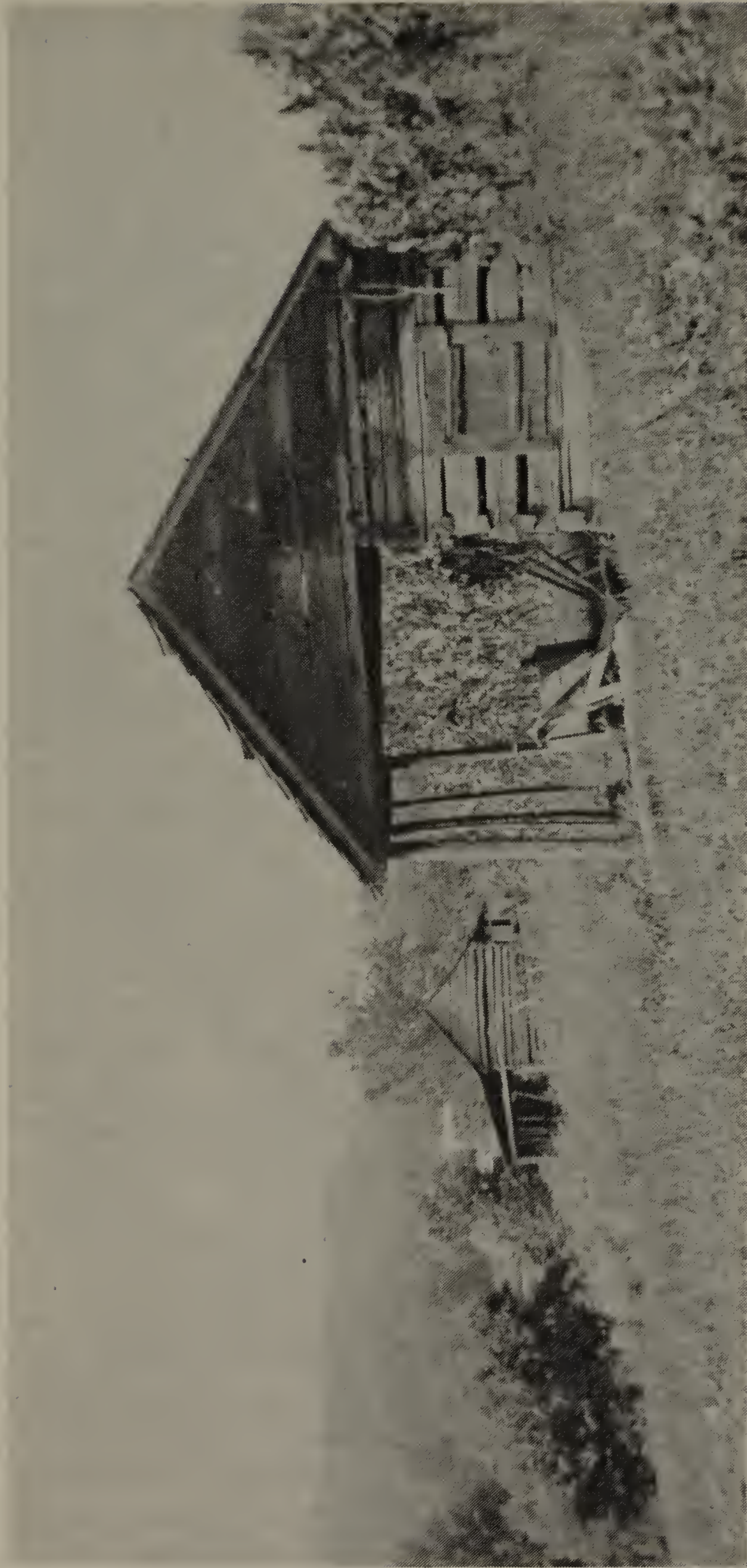
Kige Longmire. He rode with them in their clumsy farm wagon back to Lost Creek, where he managed the family farm for the next eighteen months.

During the summer of 1897, Sill plowed and tended fourteen acres of corn in a field they called the "Long New Ground," and an additional five-acre tract in a meadow where the Indian wigwams had stood when James Rice first came to Big Valley. Most of the farmers in the valley used the bull-tongue plow or the double shovel to cultivate corn, but Sill decided that one man could cultivate two or three times as much corn with a "two horse cultivator" such as he had seen used in the West. He sent to *Sears and Roebuck* in Chicago and bought this cultivator which he thinks was the first one in Union County. He used this simple piece of machinery for almost sixty years. "I've still got the old contraption out in the shed," he added.

As autumn approached, and as the cool rejuvenating breezes swept the humid heat from the valley, and after the frosts had completed the maturing process of the corn, Sill worked long and hard in gathering in the crop. From the earliest ray of light until complete darkness, Sill worked hard and relentlessly for now he was literally the breadwinner. The corn was piled in the crib shed, and after it was shucked it would be thrown over into the log crib for storage. The neighbors had decided to have a corn shucking for Sill, and on the designated night, some forty or more of the Big Valley neighbors ambled in to the shucking.

Coal oil lanterns were hung around the crib on cedar posts and on the tree limbs. As old men and young boys joined with exuberance in the shucking, the pile of unshucked corn dwindled rapidly. They talked of their pioneer fathers, of the panthers they had killed, and of their best fox hounds; they talked of their own crops, and of their relatives in the West.

In the ancient log house the women brewed coffee and baked stack cake and pies of a dozen different varieties. They laughed and talked, as did the men, for this was one of the few occasions when they met together. The children ran and played from the board covered crib to the huge fireplace in the house and back again. They frolicked on the frosty bluegrass in the yard, and tore through the patches of dead hollyhocks. An assorted array of dogs ran and yelped and were as playful as the



THE LITTLE LOG CORN CRIB

Nearly every farmer in Big Valley had a log crib like the one pictured above. In the autumn the corn would be gathered and piled underneath the shed. As it was shucked it would be thrown across the partition into the crib proper. Exact replicas of this type crib, even down to the size and construction of the little doors, were a familiar scene throughout the East Tennessee area. Many are still to be found.

children; the dogs ran out through the orchard, down through the barn-lot, and back again. But the men did not permit any of this to interfere with their shucking, for this was the purpose of the occasion.

"My Uncle John Rice was there working fast, just like he always did—not saying much." Sill paused for a moment, obviously reflecting admiration for his father's brother. "He was an awful powerful man," Sill continued. "He was a thick, square shouldered man with legs like a mill-post and arms like hand-spikes and wasn't afraid of anything. One time I saw him kill a timber rattlesnake with a short stick. It had seventeen rattlers, and was eight or ten feet long."

Old Rice Snodderly sat half covered with shucks and corn silks and tried to keep up with the younger hands. Sometimes he would adjust his homemade shucker, consisting of a small hickory peg tied to his hand with a piece of rawhide; and sometimes he would answer a question posed for him, or give his requested opinion on some disputed matter for he was greatly respected in the valley. "It was always said," I have heard Sill say, "that Rice Snodderly served as postmaster of Lost Creek longer than any man in the state of Tennessee had served as postmaster. He was so well thought of," Sill added, "that nobody would have considered for one minute taking the job from him, even when the administration changed."

Then there was "Uncle" Parlon Hill, "Old Uncle" Cas Wilson, and Worth Duke, a young man whose grandfather came from the "tobacco" Dukes of North Carolina. All these, and many more, attended the corn shucking at the Rice home; and when it was over, they had shucked more than seven hundred bushels of corn.

After the corn shucking, the children romped noisily ahead of their parents along the twisting road and over the well-trodden paths to their respective homes. The hounds ranged widely, for it was the season of the 'possum and 'coon. The young unmarried men and women lagged far behind, escaping the flickering, revealing rays of the lanterns which their elders carried. Everyone felt good because of the brisk fall weather, and because they had been able to assist a deserving young man such as Sill Rice.

Despite the respect and friendship which Sill enjoyed in Big Valley, the adventurous spirit welled within him. Perhaps his eighteen months in Missouri in 1896 and 1897 had merely served to intensify his romantic nature. The crops were about all laid

by for the summer, and Sill decided to join the army.

Along with Isaac Lloyd Hill, a native of Union County and long-time acquaintance, Sill went to Knoxville to enlist. Here they were told that they would have to go to Louisville, Kentucky, in order to join. The officer said to Sill as the two young men started to leave, "You're too skinny; the army won't have you." The officer did not realize the enormous strength and endurance of this sinewy young man. Since Hill had no money at all, and since Sill himself carried only five dollars, the two would-be soldiers returned to Lost Creek somewhat disillusioned. Hill later fought in the Boxer Rebellion in China and the Philippine uprising. Then he traveled around the world before becoming lost in Alaska.

A few weeks later President McKinley followed the apparent wishes of the American people and declared war on Spain. This time Sill went to Clinton to see a Captain Hicks, who was forming a company. The company was never formed, and again Sill went to work on his mother's farm.

While attending an Association Meeting in the Lead Mine Bend section, Sill encountered a young lieutenant who said he was forming a company to go to Cuba to help free the poor people from the Spanish. Sill told him that he would try to be in Maynardville the next morning to join.

Sally Rice was determined that her son would not go off to war. She used every power of persuasion—even left the house and went into the woods weeping. Finally Sill promised that he would forget about joining for the present; however he felt he must go, and at the end of the week he left for the war.

He arrived in Knoxville on Saturday, July 14, 1898, and at twelve o'clock he was sworn in the "6th United States Volunteer Immunes," so called because they were ostensibly immune from smallpox and "the fever."

The Regimental Commander, the man who was responsible for forming the regiment, was Colonel Lawrence D. Tyson, later United States Senator from Tennessee. The regiment was quartered behind Brookside Cotton Mills in Knoxville, which was then owned by Colonel Tyson.

Sill recalls with amusement that he was recognized by the lieutenant with whom he had talked at the meeting at Lead Mine Bend. "Where have you been, Rice? We were about to send someone after you," the lieutenant called from his tent. "Get a mess kit and fall in line—you're in time for dinner."

"I got in line and someone hollered, when they heard my name, 'we're having Rice for dinner.' From that time on, all the men in the company knew me. I was the last man to join Company 'I' of the 3rd Battalion." Private Marcellus Moss Rice was excited about this new life as a soldier, and he seems to remember almost every event that happened during his "hitch" of service.

CHAPTER V

As a Soldier in Puerto Rico

After spending several days doing close-order drills behind the Brookside Cotton Mills in Knoxville, Sill's regiment left for Georgia "on a rainy Saturday night." They arrived by train at Llydleg, Georgia, and started their training at nearby Chickamauga Park. "It rained almost every day," Sill recalls, "and there were some seventy-five thousand soldiers, horses, and mules in the area. Wet weather springs came up everywhere, but they were all polluted, and we could not use the water."

The water was hauled some six miles from "Big Blue Springs," out toward Ringgold. Each soldier was given two pints of water per day which was his daily ration for drinking, washing, and shaving.

After two weeks the regiment moved "to another area of Chickamauga Park across Snodgrass Hill." It was here that the famous Civil War battle had been fought some thirty-five years before. After training for three months in the overcrowded Chickamauga camp, the full regiment, consisting of some sixteen hundred men, left by train for Jersey City, New Jersey, where they were to board ship for Puerto Rico. The train trip took fifty-four hours, Sill relates. It was October, 1898.

On Sunday morning, October 15, the regiment boarded a transport ship, *The Mississippi*, in New York; and the following Saturday they landed in San Juan harbor. While serving as deck guard, Private Rice noticed a young boy sitting on a bench near him. Upon questioning the lad, Sill learned that this young boy was Charles McGee Tyson, son of the regimental commander. Young Tyson later became an army officer himself, and was killed in a plane crash in World War I. Knoxville's McGee Tyson Airport, one of the South's largest, was later named after this young boy.

The ship anchored some two miles short of the dock in San Juan, and the soldiers had to be carried ashore by small flatboats run by natives, and powered by sails and oars. Early Sunday morning, the day before the troops were to disembark, a volunteer detail of twelve men was requested to serve as an advance guard. Sill was among the first one or two to volunteer. "Get everything you have on your back," the sergeant commanded, "you'll never see this old tub again."

From daybreak that Sunday morning until midnight, the twelve men carried the regiment's supplies from the water's edge to a nearby building, where they were stored. After eighteen or nineteen hours of relentless labor, Private Rice and the other members of the small party were exhausted.

Sill recalls encountering a Spanish regiment waiting with their gear to leave for Spain the same day the American regiment landed. Spain had agreed to the terms of peace already, but the peace treaty was not signed until December 10, 1898. The island was under military rule until 1900.

Although the Spanish had been fighting the Americans only a short time before, the Spanish soldiers displayed friendliness toward the newly arrived American soldiers. "I bought a leather cartridge belt from one of the Spanish soldiers for fifty cents," Sill stated. "I still have it, I think, up in the attic with all the other things I brought home."

Monday morning Company "I" along with three other companies left by train traveling west along the northern coast of the island. The entire regiment was scattered to different sections of the little country, and Company "I" left the train at the seacoast town of Arecibo. Here the company traveled some twenty miles by foot up the Rio Grande into the hills to a small town named Utuado. They were quartered in barracks which only the day before had been occupied by the 6th Massachusetts Regiment.

It was commonly said that seventy-five percent of the entire Puerto Rican population consisted of natives. By Spanish law these natives had not been permitted to own any property, and were held pretty much in subjection, at least economically, by the Spanish. But since the war was over, and since the Spanish had lost, the natives had risen up, and were in the process of taking everything they could get from their erstwhile oppressors. The natives, hiding and sleeping by day, raided mainly by night in small bands. The native Spaniards felt their lives and property were in constant jeopardy; therefore it became the job of the American soldiers to stop vandalism.

Only a day or two after arriving in Utuado, the company commander, Captain D. E. McDowell, who at one time had been mayor of Middlesboro, Kentucky, asked for two men. Private Rice and a man named Reynolds from Corbin, Kentucky, volunteered. They were given two ponies and sent out with an old Spaniard to help round up his stolen cattle. The captain

gave the two young soldiers four boxes of cartridges and told them they would probably meet up with a group of bandits. "Bring the cattle back," the commander ordered, "or fill the devils full of lead."

All day long the two soldiers followed the old Spaniard through the hilly coffee country, any minute expecting to encounter the fierce bandits. Most of the country contained only trails through the thick, jungle-like vegetation, therefore it was necessary for the three horsemen to ride single file over the rough terrain. About dark the three men came upon a clearing with seven smoldering heaps. By gesturing with his hands, the old Spaniard explained that these ruins were the remains of his dwelling and coffee houses. The two young American soldiers learned that his buildings had been destroyed the night before, at the same time his cattle were being stolen.

While the three were examining the ruin, they caught a glimpse of some men crouching in the underbrush, whereupon the Spaniard demanded with much excitement and with unmistakable gestures, "boom, boom, Americanos, boom, boom." Though the trio pursued the suspects, they did not shoot; and their quarry soon disappeared in the maze of dense vegetation.

The night was spent with a neighbor of the Spaniard, believed by Sill to have been a son-in-law of the old man. The following three days were spent traveling to various sections of the area picking up cattle which the old man claimed. Some small boys accompanied the men to drive the small herd. When the old man spotted a calf or cow which he claimed, it would be the job of the soldiers to see that it was taken without violence. The pathetic begging and weeping with which the old women protested touched the two young soldiers, but they felt that they had to carry out their duty. They, of course, never knew whether the Spaniard had a right to all the stock he claimed; but on the other hand, they did not know but what the poor, wretched women were concealing a cow stolen by their husbands or sons.

At the end of the fourth day, the two soldiers, with their Spanish companion, drove their herd of seventeen cows and thirteen calves back to the town of Utuado. Their first mission was accomplished.

Paradoxically, both the natives and their Spanish enemies welcomed the intervention of the American soldiers. The natives, understandably, held a warm place for the Americans because it

was partly on their account that the yoke of Spanish oppression was removed after having existed for nearly three hundred years. The natives would insist on carrying the soldiers on their backs across streams, and wanted to assist them without accepting pay.

Private Rice and Private Andrew Bowen, also of Union County, were assigned to a Spanish family named Serrano. They were to protect the lives and property of the Serrano family against any marauding. "There was a big family living in a little old house, but they just insisted that we move in too," Sill stated. "There were eight of the Serrano children. I still remember all their names, I think. They were: Pancho, Anselmo, Socorro, Yago, Ramon, Manuel, Marcelino, and Esalno."

During the day, the two soldiers would patrol the areas, but at night they were supposed only to protect their benefactors, the Serranos. Hence, when a robbery occurred one night nearby, the soldiers would not leave for fear the robbers would loot the Serrano place also. Early the next morning the Americans did investigate the neighboring house to find that the owner had been robbed during the night of 185 bags of dried coffee ready for market, a herd of ponies, and some fat cattle. The family had fled into the coffee groves where they remained throughout the long damp night with the coffee hands.

Although the elder Serrano was fairly well-to-do, owning much land and some seventeen huts for his coffee hands, his own house was very simple. The sole opening into the house was a single door in the floor, for the house was built on long poles. Over the door, which opened as a trapdoor, a large stone would be rolled at night to keep intruders out. The elder Serranos slept on plain folding cots, as did the soldiers; but the numerous children knew no bed except the floor. There was no furniture except for the crudest handmade items. The Serrano woman was expecting her ninth child, and the soldiers decided they would move out into one of the tiny huts with the coffee hands. This the Serrano family objected to strenuously, showing their willingness to provide the soldiers the best at their command. If it was learned that the young Americans desired a certain citrus fruit, the youngsters would be sent to search the hilly regions and the river banks until they found the desired food.

If the home of the owner of the plantation was crude, it



READY FOR THE WAR IN THE CARIBBEAN

This picture, taken in the summer of 1898, shows Sill and seven of his companions shortly before they left their Georgia training grounds for Puerto Rico. They are, from left to right, as follows: Private Marcellus Moss Rice, Corporal Dave Beverly, Corporal James Miller, Private Henry Miller, Private Irwin Baker, and Sergeant W. M. Reeves. Private Charley Reynolds is seated. It is believed that Sill is the only survivor of this group.

was nevertheless far superior to the shabby huts where the coffee pickers lived. These tiny huts, built on long poles, were constructed of grass, dead banana-tree leaves, and bark. The huts were built off the ground because of the heavy rain which came every day. Heating was no problem as the climate was always warm.

Except for some sugar cane which was grown along the rivers, most of the country was devoted to the raising of coffee; but there were also bananas, coconuts, lemons, and other citrus fruits. The labor for picking the coffee was supplied by the natives, mainly the women and children. The children, wearing little woven baskets around their necks, would spend long hours gathering the coffee near the ground, while the adults would pick from the higher boughs on the bushes. The wages were about fourteen cents per day.

After Sill lived some three months in the Serrano home, Captain McDowell, the company commander, sent messengers throughout the country-side to bring in all the soldiers of the company. A peace treaty had already been signed, and the robbing and thieving of the Spanish by the natives had largely been halted. The soldier who came to inform Private Rice and Private Bowen that the company was to be drawn back together, was a William Lane of Knoxville. Lane, one of the last four survivors of Company "I," died only recently.

The regiment left for Savannah, Georgia, on February 15, 1899. A month later, a group of soldiers from the Knoxville area chartered a train car from Savannah to Knoxville. The regiment was mustered out on April 5, 1899, and the soldiers made their ways to their homes. Of the one hundred twelve men in Company "I," only Sill Rice and two others are believed to be living. They are Henry Wagoner, age ninety-six, and Sam Lane, both of Knoxville. "I still talk to Sam Lane on the phone sometimes," Sill informed me. "It's not long distance. I must ring him up again soon. He is a brother to William Lane who died the other day, you know. We're about all that's left of our old company, and we're not much of a company any more," Sill laughed.

CHAPTER VI

To the Oklahoma Land Rush

Not long after Sill was mustered out of the army, he was approached by venerable Parlon Hill who offered him a job helping survey roads in Union County. "The Court has appropriated \$52,000 to build some new roads in the county, and I am a commissioner for the building of them," old Parlon Hill had told Sill.

Sill took the job, and the next several weeks worked in different sections of the county helping the surveyors. "We surveyed part of Highway No. 33, the road leading from Middlesboro to Knoxville," Sill stated. "It included one of the longest straight stretches of roads in the area. We surveyed several shorter roads." But spring was coming, and Sill returned home to put out another crop.

He liked to watch the young corn grow in the warm spring, and he liked to watch the cattle fatten in the pasture; he liked to pick up the loose rocks from the fields and haul them in the little homemade sled to places where he could build useful stone walls. He enjoyed splitting posts. He liked to listen to the foxes barking on Lone Mountain the night after hog killing, and to hear the horn of the fox hunters calling in their hounds on Sunday morning after the all night hunt. He loved everything about the soil; but he wanted some of his own. To buy land, he needed money; and it was difficult to raise enough crops on the Lost Creek farm to feed and clothe the large family; and it was even harder to have a surplus of commodities to sell.

Again Sill left home—this time to work in a section of Union County known as Lead-Mine Bend. He and several other men were hired by Sherman Stiner, a wealthy and prominent Union County farmer and businessman. There were rich deposits of silver and of zinc in a hard, flint-type rock. But before the ore could be used, the stone in which the deposits were embedded had first to be crushed. The steam engine produced power for crushing this stone, and these engines were fired by wood. It became the job of Sill and the other workers to cut the supply of wood for these giant engines.

The men lived in an old house and did their own cooking. "The hours were from sunup till sundown," Sill recalls. "We generally worked about eleven hours a day. We worked in teams

of three. Two men would cut the wood with an old two-man cross-cut saw, and one would split it with a maul, ax, and wedge. If the three of us worked just as hard as we could all day long, we could cut five cords. At fifty cents a cord that was \$2.50 to be divided between the three of us." Sill continued after pondering a moment, "I'll tell you those were hard times. They were having hard times in Missouri, too."

The ore from this mining operation was first shipped by flatboats down Clinch River to Clinton; but because of its heavy weight, this method proved inefficient. Some of the boats were even sunk. Later the ores were hauled on large wagons drawn by horses and mules, but this system too proved to be uneconomical. Because of this transportation problem, Stiner was finally forced to give up his new venture, and Sill Rice returned home.

"I had heard and read that 2,500,000 acres of new land was to be thrown open for settlement in Oklahoma," Sill remembers, "and I wanted some of it." To those who drew the lucky number it would be sold for \$5.00 an acre. "I was told that the land was dry and covered with volcano ash," Sill said, "but I didn't care how poor it was. I wanted some land, and I wanted to be a pioneer like my great-grandfather, James Rice, had been in Big Valley."

Sill had planned to go to Oklahoma a year earlier, but had contracted typhoid fever and was forced to abandon these plans. "I had a fever of 104°, and my beard and all the hair on my head came out. Dr. Longmire just about give up hope on me. It was three or four months before I started to eat to amount to anything."

Sill decided first to go to Missouri to work out additional money for the land he hoped for, and to wait for the great opening in Oklahoma. This time Sill went to Platt County, in the northwestern section of the state, near the Missouri River. His older brother, Rufus, had worked in Platt County in 1882, and had left there destined for Oregon, where he planned to see the relatives of his cousin, Charles Rice.¹

Sill arrived in Missouri on March 3, 1901, and the Oklahoma land opening was not until late summer. He visited his cousin, Milton Snodderly, who had been in Platt County for some time. Snodderly, who was a carpenter and school teacher, could offer no work; but he introduced Sill to a neighbor named David Masterson, for whom Sill worked all summer.

"I got there on Saturday," Sill stated, "and on Monday I started working for David Masterson. He was a second cousin to the famous lawman, Bat Masterson."

Masterson, who was already past sixty, had spent his life cultivating the four hundred acres of land on which he was born. Most of the work that summer was done by Sill and the son-in-law of Masterson, a young man named Albert Raulston. He had married Masterson's only daughter, and had come originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee. Years later, after Sill had settled down in a rural section of Knox County, he was visited by a Primitive Baptist preacher named Raulston, and learned that this old preacher was the father of Albert Raulston with whom Sill had worked as a youth.

Raulston had a filly he wanted broke as a riding mare. He offered five dollars to have the colt broken, and Sill agreed to take the job. For two Sundays he rode the nervous animal through the rich farm fields of Platt County—and the young mare, though shy, seemed to be doing fine. On the third Sunday Sill took to the open road, and traveled some seven miles to the east.

He rode by the house where "Jesse James got his woman," and on his way back to the Masterson farm, his mount threw him. Badly shaken and leading the spirited mare, the young farmhand returned home. "I just got to thinking," Sill confessed, "about what I'd do if I got a broken leg and me a thousand miles away from home. I just didn't think I should risk this for five dollars. I told Raulston this. He was very angry. Said I'd ruined his horse."

Raulston and Sill helped raise and harvest some two hundred acres of wheat, in addition to other crops. They worked twelve hours each day, six days a week, with an occasional Saturday afternoon off. On the week-ends Sill would often walk the five miles down to Smithville, but he spent little or no money. He made only twenty-three dollars per month, and he would be needing this for the land in Oklahoma, if he were lucky enough to obtain a claim.

"What kind of man was Masterson?" I asked Sill.

"Well," the old man replied, and paused. The low hissing sound of the steam escaping from the old iron teakettle attracted his attention for only a moment. "Masterson was an honest hard-working man, as far as I ever knew. He always paid me what he owed. But," Sill added with a little hesitancy, "he was

a full, hard-shelled Democrat, and he was very outspoken." I had never heard Sill speak ill of any man, and he was careful not to do so now. "He hated President McKinley. He would bring up the President at the breakfast table and cuss and swear and wish somebody would kill him. He just seemed to hate him—always wishing somebody would shoot him, and it wasn't for long before the president was shot and killed." Sill added in all sincerity, "I expect Masterson was happy when he heard it. Now, that was David Masterson, and that was his fault."

The Masterson farm was near the homeplace of Jesse James, and the people in that area had known the James family well. Quantrill, the guerilla leader with whom the James boys first joined up, was described by the people in the area as being the "meanest man that ever lived." But the James boys were thought, consistent with their fabulous reputation, to be "good boys at heart." The mother of the James boys was also well liked but was described by Masterson himself as a woman who could "out-cuss any sailor when she was mad." Though she lost an arm when the Pinkertons threw a bomb into her house in an attempt to kill Jesse, she continued to work her farm. The folks in that area told how the mother of the country's most infamous outlaw would follow the team of horses day after day, turning the prairie soil with her one strong arm. She died in 1916, at an advanced age.

James Longmire, also a cousin to Sill and his former teacher, had become a well established farmer in that rich section of Missouri in the ten years he had lived there. But back in Tennessee, his mother, a brother, and three sisters all died of "the fever," and other members of the family were down with the same disease; for that reason Longmire returned home. He married in Tennessee, and never returned to the West. He was the father of Wayne Longmire, previously mentioned, a wealthy and respected businessman in Knoxville.

. "That was my mother's brother, and when they all took sick, I was still in Tennessee and Mother sent me down there to help carry wood and water. There were nine members of that family all down with the fever—all sick at one time, and all in one big room.

"I set up with Harvey the night he died," Sill said, his voice breaking so that he had to stop for a minute. He took a handkerchief from his pocket. "Then Aunt Neicy died, and Betty, and Florence." He paused a minute, trying not to show his emotions. "Then Emma died."

"Cousin Jim Longmire, that was Wayne's father, he came in from the West, as they were burying the last five members of his family. He came by Dr. Longmire's place to ask about his family, and they told him about his mother dying and his brother Harvey and the three sisters and they told him, 'They are right now burying Emma.' He ran for about a mile to get to the cemetery just before they lowered her into the ground.

"Well, I waited on the family for twenty-six days," Sill said proudly. "The five had died during that time, but the rest of the family got all right. Wayne comes to see me every now and then," Sill stated with pleasure. "He never comes to see me but what he brings me something. He rung me up the other day—said he had been neglecting me. He promised to come out sometime during Christmas."

Much of the work on the Masterson farm was completed for the summer. It was almost time for the Oklahoma land opening. Several tracts of land had previously been opened in Oklahoma; but in this particular opening, land belonging to the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache was up for settlement. The soil was described by a Kansas paper at the time as being of three types: "light sandy, dark sandy, and a dark waxy soil." The last type was described as being the poorest type.

"I caught a train out of St. Joseph, in August, 1901, headed for Oklahoma," Sill remembered well. "There were twelve coaches, all packed with people heading for the Indian Country. After a while men started climbing on top of the coaches, baggage in hand; and before long there were about as many people on top of the train as there were inside. People were pouring into Oklahoma from all directions."

There were fifteen thousand quarter-section tracts of land to be sold at the nominal price of five dollars per acre; but to try for these fifteen thousand parcels of land were from two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand men and women. Each person drawing for the land had to be twenty-one years of age, had to be a United States citizen, and had to swear that he did not own as much as one hundred acres of land. About one-fourth of those trying for land were women; they had to swear that they were not married.

The drawing was held at the town of El Reno, in what would soon be the state of Oklahoma. This was a small town on the North Canadian River near Oklahoma City. "When the train stopped and we hit the ground," Sill said, "everyone started running to register. You had to make an application before a notary public, you know. They were set up all over town. Most of the notaries had a little table and chair just a sittin' in the street; and everyone was a runnin' toward them just like their life depended on it. They came in there from might-nigh everywhere."

As a person registered, he was given a number, and a card bearing a corresponding number would be placed in a large lottery wheel. Each of the quarter million people registered in this manner; and when the drawing was started Sill was astonished to recognize the name of the first man to receive a claim.

His name was Clarence Woods, of Union County, Tennessee, Sill's distant cousin. "Clarence Woods was a nephew of Dr. Bill Woods who practiced medicine in Knoxville for many years. You've heard of Dr. Woods.

"But I didn't get my land," Sill smiled. "I came close, but I didn't get a claim. My number, I still remember, was 16,902."

Standing immediately behind Sill was a man named John Moore, Sill recalled, and after starting a conversation, he learned that Moore owned a farm on Lost Creek in Union County. He was originally from Oklahoma, but had traded his Oklahoma land for "a poor ridge farm up towards the head of Lost Creek." He had traded his level farm land in Oklahoma to a man named John Brogan, whom Sill knew. But Brogan had represented the climate of East Tennessee as "being the healthiest in the world." Moore made the trade without seeing the Tennessee farm because he thought the "wonderful climate" might help his ailing wife. After traveling well over a thousand miles to his new land, Moore was furious. It was rough rocky land which could not be tended. He immediately came back to Oklahoma to try for a new claim and to give John Brogan a good whipping. He failed in his attempt to obtain a claim, as Sill did, but he succeeded in whipping Brogan. "It took several men to pull Moore off Brogan," Sill heard the men say.

The Indians who had been routed from their 2,400,000 acres of land were, according to Sill, "running around in all directions." Each of the Indians was given 320 acres on a reservation, but evidently they did not stay put too well. "They would

get on their ponies and just ride as fast as the little animal could carry them. I never knew where they were going," Sill confessed, "but they seemed always to be in a hurry.

"These Indians usually wore their hair in braids down their necks, and very often they wore a greasy old hat," Sill added. "All these Indians called themselves 'John Indian,' and when they got around a white man, they would say, 'John Injun, bad Injun. John Injun get white man—John Injun, heap bad Injun.' " Sill admitted that these Indians, after having had a few drinks, did sometimes act frightened, but they never bothered anyone to his knowledge.

Sill hated to think that his time and money in coming to Oklahoma were completely wasted; he would stay in the area for a while, he thought, and he might still have a chance to get a piece of land. He got a job with a threshing outfit and worked his way from one rig to another up the Cimarron River. Each threshing outfit, by agreement, worked only in one district consisting of six sections, or six square miles.

Sill worked for a threshing outfit owned by a man named Luttrell who had lived over forty years in Kansas before coming to Oklahoma. He was originally from an area in Knox County, Tennessee, called Copper Ridge. This is within a very few miles of where Sill lives today.

Sill smiled broadly as he recalled an incident which occurred over sixty years ago at this threshing machine. He sat on the front porch of his home as he told the story, and the pungent odor of honeysuckle carried freely from the maze of vines just across the road on the clay bank. Lilacs, too, bloomed above the stone wall at the edge of the old orchard; the sun was unusually warm for late May. "I keep thinking I hear katydids a hollerin'," Sill grinned, "but I can't decide if I really hear them or just a roarin' in my head.

"Luttrell had pulled the machine off the road for a weekend," Sill started. "We took it off what you would call the main public road to keep the Indians and other wanderers from robbing the cook shack. Well, all the other hands had gone into town, and I was staying with the outfit—sort of guarding it, you might say.

"I was a setting out there on the prairie late one Saturday evening by myself—no one else around. I looked out to the west and saw a man coming toward me, and the first thing I noticed was that he was wearing a brand new John B. Stetson

hat. He had on old dirty work clothes," Sill pointed out, "but he wore this expensive top hat.

"This man's name was Henry Edeland, an Italian," Sill continued, "who had been living in New Jersey. He asked me about a job, and I told him that our crew was short and that he probably could get a job if he waited around and saw Luttrell on Monday morning.

"I loaned him one of my blankets and some money. All he had was his new expensive hat and a pistol. He told me this himself," Sill stressed. "He kept talking about his gun—sort of hinting he might like to use it.

"Well, sir, I learned that he was an anarchist. That's what he believed in—and he was also an agnostic, or infidel—he was a fool," Sill charged with quiet but positive conviction. "He was a fool if ever I saw one.

"This Henry Edeland feller worked all week. He wasn't much of a hand," Sill was quick to point out, "but he worked a little and drew a little pay. The next Saturday night me and him were sleeping in the bed of a wagon—sort of trying to keep off the ground for fear of snakes. Sometime during the night a terrible storm came up. It lightened so that you could read a newspaper, and the wind almost blew everything away. When the rain started to come, me and Edeland got our blankets and went into the granary to keep dry.

"Well, it wasn't long before the sun come up and the dust and chaff was all washed off things and the prairie looked fresh and clean." Sill paused here and I suspected that he must be near the end of his story.

"This Edeland man got to looking for his hat," Sill went on, "and finally found it where it had got trampled as we left the wagon-bed during the night. Well, he flew into a rage. He went wild—as wild as any man I ever saw. He accused me of mashing his hat, and said I had done it on purpose. He would fling the hat down on the ground himself, and stomp it, and kick it—then he would curse me some more.

"He kept talking about shooting me," Sill said, and I thought maybe he would. He just got madder and madder, and kept putting his hand on his gun, and swearing he was going to shoot me. I said to him, 'Why man, you don't know which one of us tramped on your hat in the middle of that storm. And if I did do it, you know I didn't intend to.' But you couldn't reason with him.

"I listened to the fool threaten to kill me for over an hour," the old gentleman stated, "and finally I just walked up to him, unbuttoned my jump-jacket and said, 'I don't know what kind of a crazy fool you are; but if you have the nerve to shoot, then go ahead and shoot.' He had such a wild look in his eyes that I thought he might really shoot. I thought that if he did I could just fall over there in the straw and somebody would find me. But he didn't shoot. He just stood there looking me in the eyes, and finally he turned and left. I started my breakfast."

One could hardly have found a more unpleasant and physically challenging task than wheat threshing on the hot Oklahoma plains that year. The Indians said it was the hottest, driest season in fifty years. Rivers, wells, and creeks were nearly all dry. The few farmers who lived in the area hauled their meager supply of water for miles. From the still, stagnant ponds of water in the once rushing river beds, mosquitoes swarmed in thick, black clouds at night, rendering sleep almost impossible.

The ordinary pay was one dollar per day, and the work consisted of ten or eleven mad, rushing hours where the labor never ceased. In each outfit there had to be a "stack man." It was his job to remain on the straw pile in the full stream of hot dusty straw and make a neat orderly stack. The straw was filled with chaff, dust, and black smut, and it burned the nostrils and blinded the eyes in never-ending fashion. After a short time, the stacker would be rendered as black as a miner from the mixture of perspiration and filth; but he worked on.

It was difficult to find a stack man. The price paid him was raised to \$1.25 a day, but even then, Sill recalls, "it was hard to find even a Mexican, who would agree to work as a stack man. Why, law," Sill continued, "it sometimes got up to 104 degrees. But I told the thresher man that I'd take the stacker's job. And I did. I'd tie a red bandanna around my neck, and one across my mouth and nose, and it that hot. My eyes would still burn something terrible, and I'd cough all day, but I was a gettin' a little extra, don't you see, and that was that much toward getting me a little piece of land for myself."

The meals were cooked in a wagon and were always filled with grit and sand. When night came, the threshing hands would sit around the campfire for a while and swap tales and talk of

their homes, the many places they had been, and the many places they would go. Some of the men would follow the threshing outfits north across the country—even into Canada. But daylight came early, and the exhausted men soon flung themselves upon the ground, or slept in the newly threshed straw. Every man carried a blanket to cover himself, as the nights were often cool.

"A lot of times," Sill explained, "we would encircle ourselves with a yarn string, soaked in kerosene to keep the centipedes and tarantulas away. They were supposed to be awfully poison. The prairie rattlers were there too," Sill stated. "I almost got bit by one. I was turning flax; and I picked up a bunch of flax and there lay one of those rattlesnakes all coiled up and ready to strike. But I killed him with one good lick with my pitchfork. But," Sill added somewhat subconsciously, "those little prairie rattlesnakes never got to the size of our old big timber rattlers here in Tennessee."

As the threshing outfit moved west, the land became poorer and was covered with volcanic ash and scrub oak and cactus. Wheat ran out, and Sill made plans to return to Tennessee. But while eating the noon meal in a little restaurant in the town of Kingfisher, he was told that there was still plenty of free land farther west, in Greer County. So with two blankets, one canteen of water, a handful of sugar and a few crackers, Sill Rice struck out across the prairie seeking the land which he desired so desperately. This was on Sunday afternoon, only a few minutes after he had heard of this unclaimed land.

As he walked along the forsaken desert, he encountered an occasional sod hut, half above the ground, and half dug-out, but there was never anyone at home. "The people had marked off the boundary of their land with little pegs, and had gone off to Kansas or Missouri to make enough money to start farming," Sill stated. "I'd go up to these little houses and start hollering, but nobody answered. The cattlemen were moving away. It was said that cattle ranchers would sometimes slip around and destroy the little huts. These ranchers had been leasing the land from the Indians and were making a lot of money.

"Some of the cabins near the streams were built out of poles," he said, continuing his description of the country. "The little blackjack posts were placed vertically with the ends in the

ground. They didn't build their log houses like we did in Tennessee. None of these cabins had any glass. If they had a window, it would just be a little wooden shutter that would open and close."

Occasionally Sill saw where the homesteaders had started a well, but instead of water, the wells were filled with dirt and sand blown there by the hot dry winds. The huts had been erected by the homesteaders in order that they might fulfill the legal requirements to substantiate their claims; it was further required by law that those making a claim return at least every six months to spend a night in their abode. There were a few young fruit trees, already dead, standing pathetically in the parching sun. Soon the young Tennessean had exhausted his meager supply of water; but he pushed on, hoping to find more favorable conditions.

"I laid on the prairie Sunday night and heard those little wolves a barking. The white sand blowed in my face all night, and the mosquitoes swarmed constantly. They were big and they buzzed like a sawmill. I didn't sleep very much."

Sill was up before day Monday, still heading west. The country became worse. He calculated that he had walked over sixty miles, as each mile had been staked off for a public road. He did not meet a single person, and was almost starved for water; the unbearable sun beat down on the bare, sandy earth and reflected miserably into his face.

Finally, Sill gave up his search for the supposed free land and decided to turn back. When darkness fell Monday night, he quickened his pace. He walked throughout the moonlit night, almost delirious from thirst. "All I could think of," Sill relates, "was one of the cold, clear springs in the hills of Tennessee. I thought of every deep shady spring in Big Valley, and every little creek and branch. I even thought of Cas Wilson's old pond. I just couldn't make myself think of anything but water. I promised myself that I'd never leave East Tennessee if ever I got back."

After the grueling one hundred twenty mile walk in this forsaken country, Sill came upon the dried-up bed of the Cimarron River, and beyond it he saw a cabin. His faltering step quickened. "A big bulldog ran out toward me like he was going to tear me apart," Sill well remembers, "but I saw a well in the yard, and paid no attention to the dog. I saw an old Negro standing in the yard; he was trying to stop his dog. 'Mister,' I

said, 'I'm starving for water. I'm going to get me a drink from your well.' The old Negro was awfully friendly. He saved my life."

Sill had thought that he had been in New Mexico, but the Negro insisted he had been in the Oklahoma panhandle. "That place ain't even been settled yet," the old Negro had told Sill.

"What was the land like?" I asked.

"Well, there was cottonwood and sycamore that grewed along the rivers—and some red ash. But when you got away from the streams, you didn't find much timber except those little blackjack—sort of scrubby oaks." Sill mused a moment. "The ground was covered with a sort of sandy looking dirt that really didn't look like soil. I thought to myself, 'Why that land won't grow nothing.' But I had heard that it was a great land for sweet potatoes and broom corn. But stock couldn't eat broom corn. Oh, the cows would chew on it thinking it was oats. But when they found out what it was, they would spit it out. Later on, the people found out that this was a good land for kaffer corn. It made the finest chicken feed ever was."

Upon returning to Hennesey, Sill reclaimed his trunk from Brogan. Two of Brogan's sons were working on a grain elevator in Hennesey, earning the rather preposterous sum of \$2.50 per day. They told Sill that they could help him get a job as a carpenter drawing the same pay. But after his long and disillusioning trek across the Oklahoma plains, Sill was ready to leave. He bought a train ticket to Fort Worth, Texas, where he had in mind obtaining work picking cotton. In applying for a job, he was asked if he had any experience as a cotton picker. He explained that his only experience had been helping his mother in a very small garden patch of cotton in Tennessee, which she raised to make her own cotton cloth. (No cotton is raised in East Tennessee although it is the chief money crop in West Tennessee.) He was told, perhaps truthfully, that he could not make enough money at this task even to buy his meals, that this was a job for skilled hard-working Negroes who had worked at it since they were children. The young Tennessean took the advice, and caught a train for Memphis.

"My baggage was lost in Memphis, and I had to lay over for two days. I was sitting on the porch of a rooming house when I saw a little man ride by the house on a bicycle. I saw it was Autry M. Greer, my 1st Lieutenant during the war. I called to him, and he just insisted that I go over to his place and

spend the night. I told him that I had already paid my lodging, and that I would be leaving early the next morning. I never saw him again, of course. He was one of the finest men I ever knew—all the men in the company liked him."

The next morning Sill located his baggage, and continued by train the four hundred miles to Knoxville. He started walking home, and spent the night with Preacher Tom Baker, his brother-in-law. The following morning he walked the remaining thirty miles to Lost Creek. It was September 21, 1901, his birthday. He was twenty-eight years old.

CHAPTER VII

Logging, Illinois, and Marriage

"The corn was ripe when I got home, and I started pulling fodder for my mother. I was working down in one of those little creek bottoms when a Collins woman came over and asked if I would help her wait on her husband.

"The woman's husband was Bud Collins," Sill continued, "and he had been down with the fever twelve days. His woman had waited on him day and night and she was getting sick herself. Other people were afraid to go in on the fever because it was so catching.

"I went over to their little cabin and waited on that poor boy. We thought he would die for sure, but he got well and always worked hard. He was poor, but he tried to get ahead. Finally he left Tennessee and went to Indiana and died there, I later heard. I have always been awful glad," Sill said with satisfaction, "that I helped that man out."

Within a few weeks after returning from the Oklahoma territory, Sill obtained a job logging timber off the rugged Cumberland Mountain near the present town of Lake City. This was in the vicinity where he had, several years earlier, worked as a coal mining buddy.

Charlie Reed, a young Methodist minister and son of "Big John" Reed of Cove Creek, had obtained a contract with the Beech Cove Mines to supply prop timbers for the mines. This timber was an indispensable part of the mining operation as it served to prevent the roof of the mines from caving in. Reed hired Sill and his companion, Kige Weaver, to cut this timber. Also working at the task was one Isaac Witt who had married a sister to Robert Hankins, brother-in-law to Sill. The young Weaver boy was described by Sill as having "little corn-stalk legs, but much stronger than he appeared." Witt, on the other hand, was a "short, chunky man."

Sill and young Weaver were given an abandoned cabin to live in while working on the mountain. Not having been furnished a bed, they were obliged to sleep on a heap of wheat straw piled in one corner of the room. Witt had a family and lived in the area. Reed had agreed to furnish the two Union County men coffee, sugar, and side meat; but Sill, an absolute

vegetarian, found that diet scanty. "There was an old Sour John apple tree not far from the cabin," Sill added as if attempting to be objective in the description of his plight. "They got about twice the size as the end of your thumb," Sill said in describing the apples. "Reed furnished us a little iron skillet, and after we came in off the mountain in the evenings late, we would sometimes fry some of them little Sour John apples in the bacon grease."

With only axes and crosscut saws, the three worked long hours at this strenuous task of felling the big timber. The logs were snaked off the mountain with a giant team of oxen. Often the logs would start rolling down the side of the steep mountain, throwing the steers into the tangle of vines and undergrowth and requiring all three men to cut them out. "The steers got so skinned up and bruised that I thought they were going to get killed," the old gentleman said compassionately. "I felt so sorry for them that I hated to be around and watch Witt. The Weaver boy felt the same way."

Sill and Weaver preferred the laborious task of pulling the crosscut through the oak and chestnut to snaking the logs; Witt, on the other hand, did not mind the danger of snaking the logs along the perilous trails. "He liked to crack his blacksnake whip and curse, and swear, and holler at the oxen," Sill said amused. "He didn't care for the danger. He liked it."

After several weeks of pitting their strength against the wilds of this great mountain, the men learned that Reed had taken a trip and had left word for Sill and Weaver to buy supplies from the mine commissary on his account. But the commissary refused them, and the two men were completely out of food. This food shortage, coupled with the increasing dangers involved in driving the oxen, convinced the two men that they could do better working in the West.

Back in Big Valley, Sill had already met his future wife, Ibbie Jane Weaver, oldest of fourteen children and daughter of the respected preacher, Thomas Weaver. "The first time I saw Ibbie," Sill recalls fondly, "was when she was five years old. We were having the big association meeting, and Preacher Weaver and many other preachers were there. I remember that little five-year-old girl around the preachers. I was the same age as



REV. THOMAS WEAVER AND SOME PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
ASSOCIATES

Ibbie's father, Tom Weaver, poses for the camera with a group of his friends about 1900. He is shown on the front row, second from the right. The writer is unable to identify other members of the group.

she was, and I thought it was terrible that she would be so friendly with those preachers."

Being the oldest child, Ibbie Weaver shared a great responsibility for the care and well-being of the other children. Her father was away most of the time conducting meetings, and Ibbie became adept at managing the affairs of the farm.

"Ibbie sort of run things," Sill said with pride, "even when she was a little girl. What time she was not helping make clothes for one of the younger children, she was out in the woods helping the boys snake logs or she was in the fields supervising the cultivation of the crops.

"She knew how to work," Sill continued, "and she wasn't afraid to spend twelve or sixteen hours in the hayfield. The boys sort of looked to her for leadership, and they called on her when they were in trouble.

"One time some of the younger children had gone up in the holler above the house to bring in the milk cow—she generally wore a bell," Sill explained, "so they could hear her and tell about where she was. Well, they run upon a big rattlesnake, and they came running for Ibbie who was chopping in a little corn patch up there." Sill continued almost boastfully, "She killed that big rattler herself with a hoe. It was coiled and ready to strike, but she killed it, and her just a girl."

Thomas Weaver lived in Knox County, and it was there that young Ibbie Weaver started teaching school, after having attended the University of Tennessee. One year, after her school closed, she came over to Hills' Academy to further her own education. During this time she boarded with her uncle John Weaver who lived near the Rice home.

"Old Uncle John Weaver was a farmer and ran a tanyard where he tanned leather." Sill said, "He was a fine, honest, old man. He had some boys about my age, and I would go over on Saturday nights. I had sort of become acquainted with Ibbie. I saw her when I came home on a furlough with one of the Weaver boys. We walked to church some, and back. We had talked of marriage, a little bit."

Although they were almost thirty years old at the time, they decided not to "rush" into marriage. They wanted enough money

to buy a farm adjoining the one owned by her father. She had saved up several hundred dollars from teaching school, but urged Sill to work for a while in Knoxville. "I told her I would try to find work in Knoxville, although I knew there was nothing there that would pay anything."

Sill did try for a job in Knoxville, but not very hard. He was bent on going to Illinois with Charley Wilson, Kige Weaver and a Sharp boy. When nothing developed in Tennessee, the four young men caught a train for the Midwest.

Sill soon gained employment with an old German, Richard Brinkerhoff. The story of how Brinkerhoff had climbed from a penniless immigrant to a wealthy farmer and stockholder impressed the Tennessean. As a young man Brinkerhoff had left Germany to keep from serving the required three years without pay in the German army. His father, unable to talk him out of coming to America, vowed that he never wanted to see or hear from him again. "Don't even write home," the elder German had told his son.

Arriving in New York with thirty cents which he saved by starving himself, Brinkerhoff washed dishes for three years before starting to haul coal in Bloomington, Illinois. He went to Cripple Creek, Colorado, when the wages were ten dollars a day, and a single egg sold for one dollar. He accumulated sixteen hundred dollars, hired his own men, started digging for gold, and lost everything. He then joined the Union Army for the pay he would receive, and served for the duration of the war. Back in Bloomington after the fighting, he hauled coal to earn money to buy a quarter section. After that, he bought other farms and was said to be worth over \$100,000.

The old German was well pleased with the hard working young man from Tennessee, and kept him all summer. Although Brinkerhoff was seventy-four years old at that time, he would work alongside Sill in the fields until he was so tired that he could no longer stand. Late in the afternoon, when the old man became unable to follow the plow, he would turn his horse toward the homestead, and insist that Sill also stop working.

"Old Mr. Brinkerhoff had a little pair of brown mules," Sill remembered, "and they were getting old like he was. Along about four o'clock he would get to tottering, and I could hear him holler: 'Hold up there, Tennessee. Turn your team for the barn.'"

" 'Why no,' I would tell him. 'I'm going to work on till

dark. You're paying me good, and a hired hand back in Tennessee would never be allowed to quit this time of the day.' But the old man said that he had never worked a man longer or harder than he himself worked. He would never stop till I agreed to unhitch from the plow."

The two men cultivated and husked some twelve hundred bushels of corn, and harvested several hundred bushels of oats and wheat. Sill recalls that in tasks which required several men, such as threshing wheat, all the farmers in the area would swap work; hence one farmer might work for different neighbors for a number of days in return for only one day's labor from each of several neighbors.

"Brinkerhoff found out that I could paint," the old man pointed out, "and he put me to work. I painted three of his big barns Chattanooga red. Then I painted some of his cribs, and finally his house. But I painted it white," Sill quickly added.

"Well, when I finally finished, old Mr. Brinkerhoff stood off and looked at the buildings and just went on about what a fine job it was. He asked me how much I charged; and I told him that I would just charge my regular rate of twenty-three dollars a month. 'Oh, no,' the old German said, 'that's not enough. You've done a fine job, and I want to pay you the regular rate.'

"But I told him that I was glad to get the experience. 'You've been awful good to me,' I told him, 'and that's all I aim to charge.' Well, the old man just laughed and laughed," Sill said. "He seemed just as pleased as a child with a new play thing."

Although Brinkerhoff was friendly enough, he was not given to social occasions. In the nine months that Sill lived with the German family, they never had a single visitor. Accustomed to the numerous visitors which they had in Big Valley, Sill found this to be a great contrast.

Sill received a letter from his future wife, informing him that she had, in complying with their agreement, started making plans to buy lumber for their house. She asked if he would "be trustful enough to send sixty-five dollars" as a partial payment on some lumber. Sill sent the money, and soon returned to Tennessee himself.

It was about time, he thought, to settle down.

CHAPTER VIII

Fifty Years A Farmer

Sill returned from Illinois to marry Ibbie Jane Weaver on January 28, 1904. "I never knew what she ever saw in me," Sill pondered. "I was just an uneducated man who didn't know anything but hard work. But she married me and we rented a little cabin over across the creek till we could build our house."

Ibbie had already bought two-fifths of the old Bridges' farm, and Sill soon bought two more fifths of the farm with money he had saved since he was a boy; but the remaining one-fifth belonged to a son of the elder Bridges, and he would not be legally capable of selling his share for a year. Young Bridges had agreed to sell, however, and the couple moved onto the farm and started work. Then there was some trouble with the administrator who bought the boy's share and attempted to sell it to Sill and his young bride for a profit.

Although Sill was a mild-mannered and easy-going person, he was incensed that the well-respected administrator of the Bridges estate would betray the trust bestowed on him in such a manner. After a sleepless night, Sill saddled one of his plow-horses and rode to Maynardville to have a talk with the scheming administrator. Although the administrator clearly held the upper hand, (the Rices had already put a year of hard labor into the run-down farm) he finally gave in to the earnest and determined young farmer. It was a triumphant husband who handed Ibbie a clear title to the farm that night. "We had the farm," Sill stated proudly, "and we didn't owe a cent on it."

This was the first piece of land that Sill had ever owned, and he was thrilled with the prospect, as he put it, "of building the old, poor farm up. It had been rented for years, and had been 'corned to death.' They put it in wheat sometimes," Sill continued, "but they had never sowed it in grass. It was just gradually eroding away."

Sill decided to sow timothy, lespedeza, and red clover in the little bottom on Lick Branch. "Old Mr. Hill came by," Sill remembered, "and said, 'That little bottom has been put in corn every year for over a hundred years—ever since the white man came here.'"

The new owner knew that cattle would build up the soil,

and he was more interested in protecting and enriching the farm than he was in making a few quick dollars from a cash crop. "But I did plant a six acre tract of corn for the horses and chickens," Sill pointed out. "I planted a kind of yellow corn that I brought from the West called Long Tom. And I saved the seed from this corn," Sill explained, "for many years. Finally the ears got sort of dwarfy and I had to quit planting the Long Tom. It became inbred I suppose."

Sill dug rocks from the eroded earth so the turning plow could cut clean and deep; and with these stones he constructed neat retaining walls at the lower side of the fields to stop the eroding soil. Over the years these rock walls caught the valuable topsoil which would otherwise have ended up in the Gulf of Mexico. It slowed down the gushing waters which would have cut deeper into the red clay below.

Sill planted an orchard of peach, apple, and pear trees in the little field between the log barn and the future dwelling. The old neighbors, who probably doubted that this slender young man could ever make a go of the old Bridges place, warned Sill that the land was too "clayish" to grow fruit. But Sill Rice planted the trees nevertheless, and he fertilized them, and cultivated them, and pruned them. And as the years passed, it came to be one of the most prolific orchards in the area; and those neighbors who lived long enough, gathered many bushels of fruit from it.

Ibbie had made it clear that she didn't want any "make-shift" house when they built. She didn't want to build a small dwelling with the expectation of adding more later, she said. "It would never look right," she reasoned. She wanted a big house, nine or ten rooms, and she wanted a slate roof—one that would never wear out. Sill agreed with all this for he knew she would work and do more than her share to make this dream come true.

Old Mr. Schaad, a well-to-do farmer who owned land adjoining the Rices, charged only three dollars for the cabin in which the newly married couple spent their first year. Sill worked this year's rent out by plowing one day for Mr. Schaad. "He was a good old man," Sill said appreciatively, "and he wanted to help us out.

"But we started housekeeping," the old man fondly recalled, "in that little old abandoned cabin. We had a bedstead or two, and some quilts and a feather bed. I had some furniture, and we got along fine."

The new house was started a hundred yards up from where a deep cold spring flowed from underneath a big ledge and into Lick Branch. Sill brought some poplar weather boarding from the old Rice farm on Lost Creek, some twenty miles away. "It was fine lumber," Sill stressed, "the kind you couldn't buy today at any price. There's just not any more of that kind of timber left."

Both husband and wife toiled diligently that first year. They dressed every board that went into the huge house. They used the ancient wooden planes that now hang in complete obsolescence from the rafters in the woodshed. When the year was up, the house was near enough to completion that it could be occupied. It had nine huge rooms, two porches, a basement, and a bathroom. It had plastered walls which Ibbie wanted, and a slate roof. They had made their dream come true by sheer determination and unrelenting drive.

Sill had some choice walnut lumber which he had cut and sawed; and he used this for making furniture and for finishing the interior of the new house. Old Thomas Weaver, in addition to being a preacher, was a carpenter and he too helped build furniture and to finish the interior of the sturdy home when he was not away on preaching missions.

Down through the years Sill earned a reputation for being the hardest working man in the area. I have heard many of the people who worked with him say that he was the strongest man "for his looks" they ever saw. I think he detested laziness more than anything else, and I think he was prouder to be known as a hard worker than he would have been with any other honor which could have been bestowed upon him.

Sill never tasted alcohol in any form, nor did he ever take up the habit of using tobacco. I never knew him to drink a soft drink, attend a movie, or eat in a restaurant a single time in the twenty-five years that I have known him. Nevertheless his ideas were remarkably progressive and modern. When Tennessee's famous monkey trial was underway—a time when anyone sympathetic with the ideas of evolution was accursed as being an infidel—Sill thought individualistically. He never questioned that adaptability and improvement of the species took place through the years.

From 1905 until 1956, a period of fifty years, Sill worked almost every day except Sunday on the Bull Run farm. In the summer there was the corn, wheat, potatoes, and hay to be cared for; and on rainy days he could work in the little board covered shop with the tools his great-grandfather had used. He could repair the harness for his team of horses, or mend a broken tongue in the mowing machine, or cut stovewood for the old iron cooking stove.

In the winter, when the hard frozen ground caught the occasional flakes of bluish snow, there was still work to be done. There were the chickens to feed, the eggs to gather, and hay to be thrown out of the barn loft for the cattle and horses; and if it was really cold, the ice would have to be broken in the creek for the stock to drink. There was wood to be sawed; for the huge fireplace consumed an enormous amount of hickory, black oak, white oak, and ash. It never got so cold but what he could keep warm pulling the clumsy little bucksaw through a gnarled hickory sapling. There were cows to be milked, corn to be shucked, and trips to the mill to be made. When the chores around the homeplace were not pressing there were trees to be cut, trimmed, snaked to the mill and sawed into lumber. Logging isn't easy for one man, and few would even attempt it.

Occasionally Sill would haul a load of potatoes, corn, or other produce to Knoxville to sell. He sold lumber, too, and in the fall of the year he would sell a few white-faced heifers and two or three of his muley steers. Soon the thrifty couple had saved enough money to purchase additional land.

"We bought that eighty acre tract from Dr. Alexander Smoot. It was all wooded, but it had a lot of good timber on it—and it still has. They called it the 'Hurricane'," Sill explained "because a terrible storm came years before and blew most all the timber down. An old man by the name of Painter Smith lived up there in that woods in a two-story log house; and when the storm came, it blew the logs off right down to the beds, they said, but it didn't hurt anyone. It blew the barn away too, and killed some stock." Sill paused a long moment as if he had finished with the Hurricane story, then he said: "Old Painter Smith left the Hurricane, as they started calling it after the great storm, and nobody has lived up there since. I think there are still some of those old logs from the house and barn still lying around up there, almost rotted."

It was while snaking logs out of the Hurricane tract that Sill

had his bout with side pleurisy. Each morning, long before the early rays of the sun had sucked up the dew from the lush blades of grass, Sill was on the running gears of the sturdy log wagon headed for the deep woods. A mile from the Thomas Weaver Road, and even farther from the nearest dwelling, he would unload his saw, axe, and cant hook.

A typical morning in this deep, tranquil woods might find Sill pausing momentarily, viewing with obvious satisfaction the mounting pile of poplar and oak logs which he had cut and dragged in during the past few weeks. To one side lay fifty or more cedar logs which he would use for fence posts. The only other sign of civilization was the half rotted logs a hundred yards away at the spot where Painter Smith had once lived.

The unnatural noise from the trace chains and single trees of the team's harness frightened two half-grown ground squirrels, and they scurried with almost inconceivable haste from under a big red oak log. Sill called to his team and was off to his long day's work.

For some time he had been hounded by a growing ache in his side and back. Sill Rice had worn out almost every ailment he ever had, and prided himself that he had taken his bed only once in his long life, and that was when he was "dying" with typhoid. The pain grew worse each day, however, and finally he became unable to eat.

"But I sort of managed to work on," Sill said. "After a while I got worse—and I hurt so bad that I got weak. Ibbie would fix me a little dinner in a poke; but when I would come home in the evening," Sill laughed a little, "I would bring the dinner back and feed it to the chickens."

Each morning Ibbie wanted to call the doctor, but in each instance Sill would insist that he work on just one more day in the belief that his malady would eventually wear off. Then one evening the determined logger had to come home early, looking more dead than alive; and Ibbie immediately summoned the doctor. He had been suffering from side pleurisy, the doctor said, and was amazed that Sill had been able to be on his feet. He could hardly believe that his seriously ill patient had just put up his crosscut saw a few hours before.

"But there was just so much to be done," Sill said with unusual stress, "that I felt like I had to be at something all the time. I never minded good hard work."

A few years later the thrifty couple purchased from Schaads an additional boundary adjoining the Hurricane tract. Later they added to this hundred acres, another small strip of land to their growing acreage. It is well over a mile from one end of his farm to the other; and although much of the land is wooded, Marcellus M. Rice looks upon every inch of it with loving care, and he refuses to consider selling any part of it, although he realizes that he will never again be able even to walk over it.

Ibbie insisted, and Sill did not object, that her mother come to live with them. She did move in with the Rices, but died a short time later. "Grandpa Weaver," Sill added, "was away in Nashville preaching and didn't get home until the day before she died."

Preacher Weaver, a veteran of the Civil War, came to live with Ibbie and Sill a year before he died. "He bought a new car in 1916," Sill chuckled; "and got scared that he was going to get killed in it and sold it for about half price."

In the meantime, two daughters, Ruby and Ruth, were born into the Rice home; and much of the work was done with the thought in mind of sending the two girls to school.

They first attended a one room school with their mother serving as the only teacher. During most of their growing-up years, they had at their command two gentle "claybank" horses: Henry and Maybelle. When Henry and Maybelle were not being worked in the fields or in the woods, they were most often occupied by the two Rice girls. Ruby and Ruth would ride over to see their Aunt Jane, or out to the ford in Bull Run Creek where the cool waters ran under the long, swinging bridge.

At the age of twenty-one, Maybelle pulled so hard she burst a blood vessel and died. The whole family cried. Henry died ten years later at the very advanced age of thirty-one.

Sill bought a new T-Model Ford in 1916. This car, along with one bought by one of the George boys and the one bought by his father-in-law, was the first in the entire area. The roads were rough, even as wagon roads go, and the tires were of poor quality. Hence, it was not uncommon to have three or four flat tires in a single afternoon. "Sometimes," Sill confided, "I would have preferred the old hack to the T-Model."



THE BARN THAT SILL AND IBBIE BUILT

In the early thirties Sill and Ibbie built their new barn. Inspired by the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Sill designed the roof without exposed supports of any sort. Shown here at the apex of the half-completed structure, Sill would extend a rope to the ground where Ibbie (shown standing beside the building) would saw the timber and fasten it to the end of the cable. In this fashion Sill would then draw the lumber upward to the roof.

In 1927 the Rice family decided on a trip to the Pacific coast to visit Ibbie's sister, Rachael Claiborne, and her family. First traveling to Chicago, they took a train through New Mexico. Returning from the six weeks' tour, they stopped off in Salt Lake City where Sill was especially interested in spending some time.

Years before he had developed a keen interest in the Mormons, and he had looked forward with great anticipation to viewing their famous city. He was greatly interested in the tabernacle, which at the time was supposed to be the world's largest building. He looked long and hard at the great dome-shaped roof, standing magnificently and without supports of any kind. After a while he announced to his wife that he was going to build a barn on the same pattern.

"The trouble with most barns," Sill commented, "is that all the king posts and supports holding up the roof are in the way of storing and moving hay in the loft."

"Oh, Dad," Ibbie had chided, "You can't build a barn like this."

"Well," Sill answered, "it won't be as big as this tabernacle, and it won't be as nice; but I've figured a little bit, and I think I can do it."

When the Rice family returned to Tennessee, Sill, with the help of his faithful wife, did build the barn. And there it stands today, a structure with a big dome-shaped roof like the great tabernacle in Salt Lake City, and underneath not a pole nor a timber to obstruct the moving of the hay. It was the only such barn in the whole area. "I never saw another like it," Sill admitted, "until Walter Hill out here decided to build one too. He came out and sort of borrowed my plan, and those two are the only ones I know of."

The amazing part is that Sill hired little or no help with the construction of this large building. "From the top of the barn I would throw a rope to the ground, and Ibbie would saw the boards and tie them to the rope, and then I would pull them up." Sill fondly shows a photograph of himself sitting on top of the tall half-completed structure, while Ibbie stands far below looping the rope around a long piece of timber.

"Ibbie was a great help to me," Sill has said many times. "She was the oldest of fourteen children, and she knew how to work, and she knew how to manage. She would work all day in the garden, and in cooking and canning. Then she would set up

till midnight breaking beans and peeling apples. In the winter she would sit by the fire and sew or quilt. I tell you she made every minute count.

"If there was a poor family in the community," Sill continued stressing the merits of his departed wife, "she was always carrying them baskets of vegetables from the garden, or a jar of milk, or some butter. And she delivered a lot of babies, too. Usually it was for poor families who couldn't afford to have a doctor; and they would call on Ibbie because they knew she wouldn't charge them anything." Sill paused, seeming to derive an immense satisfaction from reliving the past. "Yes," he finally said, "Ibbie was called out on many a night to ride to a little cabin somewhere back in these hollars to deliver a baby. Lots of times it was time for breakfast when she got back; but she would just start in working, and work all day. She didn't need much sleep—or much rest."

The girls grew up and left home, and the aging couple were again left alone. They continued to operate the farm, to care for the dwindling herd of cattle, and to fill their fine barn with hay from the Bull Run meadows for as long as Sill was able, but a man past eighty cannot fork hay ten hours a day. Each year there was less work done, until finally everything was stopped except the raising of a few chickens and a small garden. Finally, as Sill became more feeble, even the "little spring garden" was given up. "There's nothing left," the old man said in a broken voice, "but a few old dommer-necker hens."

There are those who express sorrow and pity for the old man who lives alone in the big isolated house surrounded by the Bull Run Ridges. They see only a slender man, feeble now, who is not really able to do his own cooking and keep his own house. They consider that he might break a hip and lie for days before being discovered, and they think of the loneliness and futility of whatever days he may have left. They perhaps feel that great sadness is reflected by the house where he lived with his beloved wife for over half a century.

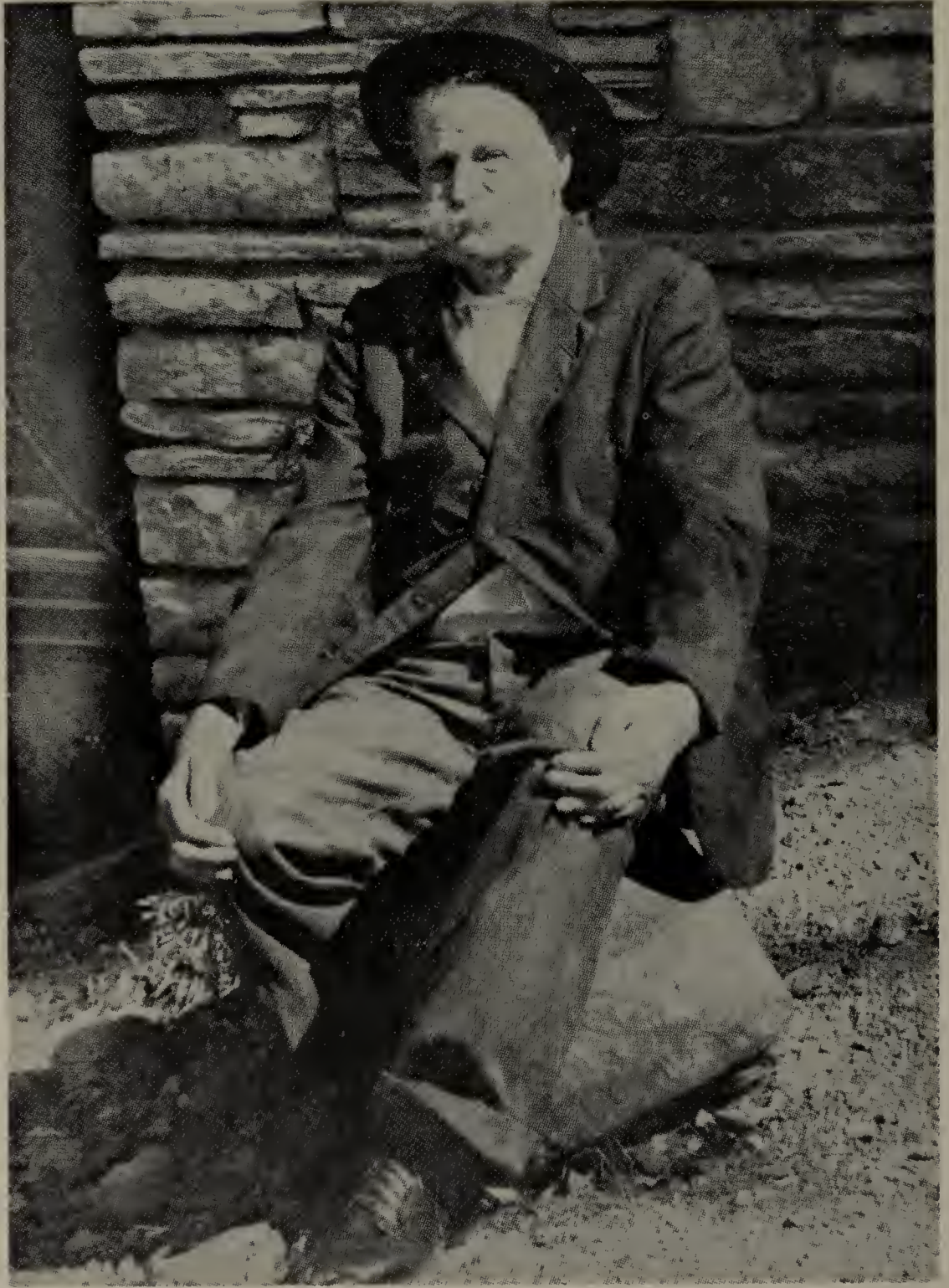
But these people do not consider the many exciting events and adventures which this humble old man may recall and relive at will. They, perhaps, are not aware of the self-satisfaction which he has, knowing that he has given a long life of the most faith-

ful and strenuous toil. They do not understand the undaunted attitude of optimism with which he views the world about him—and they would be at a loss to comprehend his extraordinary interest in all people. They don't know the little game which he plays of adding facts to previously acquired facts to form mental pictures of fascinating things which have happened in the development of this country—a country which has largely developed during his memory.

There are those who do not know of his great enthusiasm for life and his constant desire to understand the world of the present. Yes, there are those who feel sorry for the old man who lives all alone in the big house above the roaring little creek; but then that is because these people do not *know* my grandfather very well.

Appendix

The following is a brief consideration of Sill Rice's brother and sisters—and their descendants. Also included is a short biographical sketch of Thomas Weaver, father of Ibbie Weaver Rice.



JAMES RUFUS RICE

Farmer, cowboy, miller, inventor, carpenter, or businessman—any of these words could be used to describe Rufe Rice. He is shown here sitting beside the old gristmill which he operated for nearly fifty years.

James Rufus Rice

The name Rice is supposed to have been derived from the Welsh family name of Rhys or Rees, meaning red haired. If this be true, then Rufus Rice was the only child of his father whose hair coloring was consistent with this family characteristic.

Born June 27, 1859, the first child of Henry and Sally Rice, Rufe was a man of little formal education. He nevertheless excelled in many areas and was doubtless one of the most interesting and colorful characters ever to live in Big Valley. Everyone who knew him agreed that Rufe Rice was no ordinary man.

Perhaps most characteristic of Rufe was his taciturnity, and his dry wit and humor. Often he would baffle an acquaintance by his short, ironical answer. He sometimes did things which caused the neighbors to think him a bit odd. But no one ever questioned his honesty, his integrity, or his ability.

His son was born on a very cold morning, and Rufe said, as he gazed out upon the hard frozen ground, "We'll call him Zero." And so it was that his son bore the name of Martin Zero Rice. Rufe once deposited two thousand dollars in a Knoxville bank and did not even return to or communicate with the bank for twenty years. He constructed complicated engineering devices for the old watermill, and he rigged up a contraption which he connected with the mill to generate electricity at a time when no one in the valley had even heard of this invisible magic. He was progressive in this respect; yet his manner of living was not unlike that of his great-grandfather, James Rice. For a time he worked on a ranch in Montana with Teddy Roosevelt, the future President; but he never mentioned it to anyone except his daughter, Sally.

As a young boy Rufe attended school in the little one room log structure known as the Witt School. It is believed that his total schooling consisted of not more than a few months. When he was a very young man, perhaps still in his teens, he left home to work on the railroad which was being built between Knoxville and Middlesboro, Kentucky. Sill Rice, who was fourteen years younger than Rufe, recalls going to Knoxville with his father for the first time about 1881. As they started through the underpass, Henry said to Sill, "Rufe helped build that railroad." Rufe himself never mentioned his experiences as a railroad builder.

One sunny morning in April found most of the Rice family out in the field planting corn. It was a fine spring morning and the soft warm breezes swept the aromatic odors of apple blossom across the valley and mingled them with the scents of a hundred wild flowers that grew and blossomed in the shady woods up from the cornfield.

Robins darted into the furrows left by the bull-tongue plow. They grabbed up the cut worm and grub worm. Henry Rice kept a close but silent scrutiny on the planting of this all important crop. Suddenly Rufe appeared on the tranquil scene to announce that he was going West. The year was 1883, and Jesse James had been killed on a balmy day in April just one year before.

Henry lent his son twenty dollars, and with this money Rufe caught a train to Platt County, Missouri. After working for four months in the area, he set out for Oregon where some of his relatives lived—the descendants of Charles Rice. While waiting to change trains in Helena, Montana, Rufe was approached by a cowboy carrying a big whip who asked him if he were looking for work. Since he was almost penniless, Rufe accepted the offer and rode off in a buggy with this man named Meyers to a thirty thousand acre ranch near Gallatin. Meyers and his brother, both natives of Missouri, kept six or seven thousand head of cattle, along with a sizeable number of sheep and hogs. The pay to the ranch hands was thirty dollars per month, and the men did their own washing and cooking in the bunkhouse.

Rufe somewhat reluctantly took up the life of a cowboy in the rough wilds of Montana. Evidently the silent Tennessean attracted the attention of the other cowboys, and sometimes they attempted to play pranks on him. He told his young brother, Sill, of such incidents.

One day several of the cowboys were instructed to proceed some several miles out into the wilderness for the purpose of ditching and draining a marshy meadow. As they approached the meadow, a flock of wild turkeys sprang up and alighted in the distance. Realizing the cunningness of these birds, one of the hands reached into the wagon and brought out a rifle which he gave to Rufe instructing him to "take this Winchester and kill a big gobbler." Silently and quickly Rufe crept through the underbrush just as he would have inched upon a squirrel in a mulberry tree. Suddenly the turkeys appeared in the distance, and Rufe put a rifle ball through the head of an impressive gobbler.

Without any comment he returned, flinging the big bird onto

the wagon. He carefully placed the Winchester back, picked up his tools, and joined the astonished men at work. Realizing that their joke had backfired, one of the men gruffly charged that it was an accident. "No," Rufe said calmly. "I never missed a wild turkey in my life." Rufe was respected for his intense honesty, and everyone believed him. But later he admitted to the cowboys that this was the first time he had ever hunted wild turkeys.

During this era the population was so sparse in that part of Montana that a schoolhouse had not even been built; but settlers were coming in with their families, and a place to educate the children was needed. Rufe was sent by the Meyers brothers to a place where a great heap of logs had been piled for the purpose of erecting the school. A broad ax had been thoughtfully brought; but much to the chagrin of all, the men found themselves unable to use it, for such a tool requires special skill.

After the logs were properly scored by an ordinary chopping ax, the men tried to shape the logs with the broad ax. Rufe watched with amusement as each man, in his turn, complained that the handle was crooked, or too straight, or too short. Finally, someone happened to notice Rufe; and as a last resort, the huge tool was given to him. Everyone was baffled by the skill and dexterity with which this short, strong Tennessean with the red mustache shaped the logs. And it was Rufus Rice who had the distinction of hewing the logs for the first schoolhouse at Gallatin, Montana.

Having discovered his skill as a carpenter, the foreman of the ranch immediately relieved Rufe of his duties as a cowboy, and gave him a full-time job as a carpenter. He spent much of the time building cattle sheds over the many thousands of acres of land.

After working in this wild country for three and a half years, Rufe was asked to go with one of the Meyers brothers to Chicago with a train loaded with cattle. Arriving in Chicago, Rufe decided that he wanted to return to Tennessee. Meyers was insistent that Rufe return with him to Montana, and he promised to make him foreman of the colossal ranch if he would concede. "Well," Rufe replied in his rather droll manner, "I just think I'd like to see my mother." Later Rufe explained to Sill that he greatly disliked the harsh winters in Montana. He recalled that the temperature fell to forty degrees below zero, and remained so for two weeks. "I was sleeping on the floor in a buffalo hide, and I almost froze to death," he declared.

Rufe arrived in Knoxville in 1887 with over eight hundred dollars in gold on his person. He decided to buy a suit before going home. He liked his new suit so well that he stunned the salesman by purchasing two more just like the first, and then he headed for Big Valley.

The first night after Rufe arrived home he sat before the roaring fire in his father's house and answered the dozens of questions put to him about his four years in the West. Sally Rice and her daughters kept Rufe up until far into the night with unending queries about the wild Indian country. Fourteen year old Sill listened in awed admiration to these tales of adventure, and longed for the time when he too would return a hero from the mysterious and enchanting land known as the West.

Rufe became an industrious farmer, and supplemented his income by working as a carpenter throughout the valley. Sometimes he would help build houses in Knoxville. In 1892, he married Anne Longmire, the youngest child of Marcellus Moss (Dickie) Longmire. Rufe was married by old Squire Dave Turner on the long porch of the old log house. Two weeks before, Rufe's older sister, Jane, had married Preacher Tom Baker on the same spot. Two weeks after Rufe was married, his younger sister, Annie, was married to Pierce Sharp, also by Squire Turner. Sally Rice sat in the swing and wept as her son went through the short wedding vows.

Rufe bought a part of the original Rice tract, and assumed operation of the old mill. For the next forty-five years he seldom left the mill or the farm. He was an ingenious miller and a prodigious worker; and it is doubtful if anyone in the valley was more content and satisfied in his labors.

"I remember," Sill started a story about his older brother, "one time me and Rufe was up in the woodland cutting some big white oak logs to make boards. We had just snaked a big log in with the oxen when a man on horseback rode up."

The horseman was a messenger from Maynardville, the county seat, and after a few moments of idle talk he informed Rufe that the Quarterly Court had elected him as County Road Commissioner. "You've elected me," Rufe said showing unusual disquietude. "Why I didn't even want the job."

But Rufe, at the age of thirty, accepted the job. One of his first acts was to take his wagon at his own expense to Knoxville to buy a load of steel cables—an item still unknown in the valley.

With these cables he built a series of footbridges across many of the streams in the valley. Upon being informed that some of the neighbors were "talking," Rufe responded: "I don't care what they are saying. The women have to go to the store to take their eggs and buy their coffee, and they have to do it even if the creeks are up."

Later Rufe was elected to the school board for Union County in much the same manner as he had been elected road superintendent. For a time he was a partner with Rice Witt in a country store. Rufe and his cousin, Bryce Longmire, operated a ferry across Clinch River for years; and later he established a coffin shop. Rufe made beautiful coffins, but he was unable to make a financial success of the venture because he often failed to collect. He explained to his father, upon giving up the trade, that those having no money would often choose the very best coffin he had. He did not have the inclination to refuse credit to anyone; hence he closed down his shop.

The building of Norris Dam on the Clinch River in 1935 put an end to Rufe Rice's farming and business ventures, and more important to his milling. The old Rice mill that had run so endlessly and dependably beneath the grove of red cedars down on Lost Creek would cease to exist—or so it seemed.

Paradoxically, the TVA deviated from their pattern of operation which one might think of as being cold and impersonal. They made provisions for the old Rice water mill to be carefully dismantled and rebuilt at a site just below Norris Dam. And here it stands today, host to millions of visitors from throughout the country. Rufe, with his quaint black hat, and with his full grown white mustache, and possessing complete familiarity with every cog of the ancient relic, needed to be with the mill to add color and authenticity. TVA offered him a good salary just to sit around and talk to the people streaming through the mill. Rufe flatly refused. "I don't aim to set there like a monkey in a cage and have people coming by looking at me."

Rufe bought a large farm in the community of Martel, some twenty miles southwest of Knoxville. Not long after he moved into the rambling old farmhouse, on February 17, 1936, his wife died. He lived on with his daughter, Sally, whose greatest delight was caring for her father in his old days. He died at the advanced age of eighty-seven. It was not until after his death that Sally married.

Recently, while going through some of the relics and effects

left by Rufe, I encountered a letter written him by Teddy Roosevelt. The letter was written from Roosevelt's Long Island home and was dated November 17, 1915. The letter had the characteristics of a personal one and was concluded with the following sentence: "You are the type of American in whom I believe. Good luck!" It was signed "Theodore Roosevelt."

I asked Sally for an explanation of the letter. "Oh, Poppie used to work with Roosevelt in the West when they were both cowboys." It was strange, I thought, that Rufe had never mentioned this even to his brother, Sill, or to anyone, as far as is known, except Sally.

Roosevelt was one year older than Rufe, and had left the New York State Legislature in 1884 to go to the "wild country" after both his mother and young wife died within a few hours of one another. He spent two years in the West before returning to run for mayor of New York City.

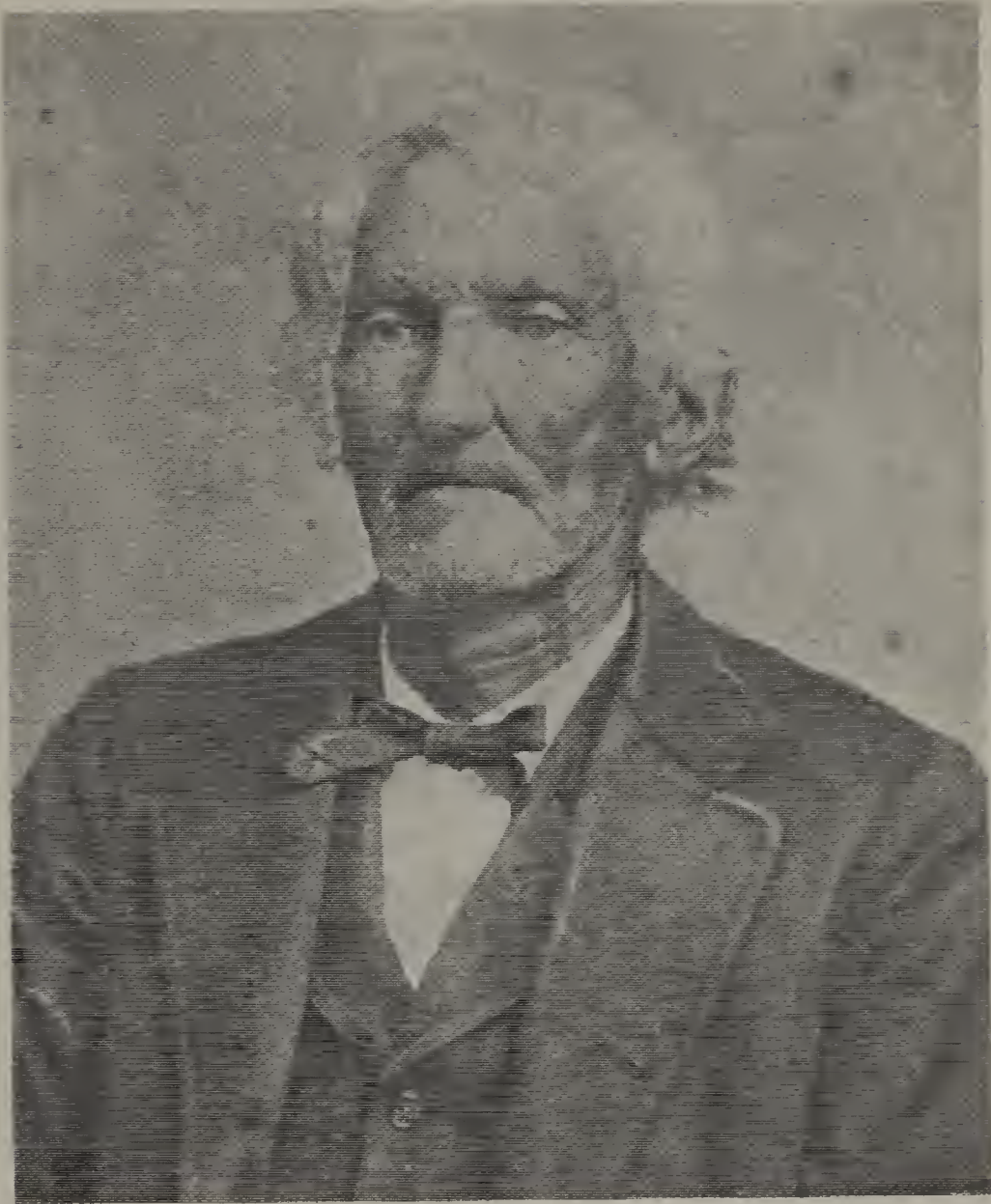
I was curious to know what Roosevelt, one of the greatest of the great, was like. "What kind of a man did Uncle Rufe say Roosevelt was?" I asked.

"Well," Sally paused. "I think he was a lot like Poppie about talking. He never had too much to say. That's why he sort of liked to be around Poppie."

Another item, stored neatly in a large hand-made secretary, carried a fascinating story. It was a mere piece of red cedar with the words "bee tree" inscribed on it. It seems that there had been a very old cedar tree standing in Big Valley after the beginning of the nineteenth century. The tree was so old (dendrologists say the red cedar may live to be hundreds of years old) that it was hollow, a rarity among cedars. And in the hollow of this tree the bees had stored honey; hence the tree came to be known as the cedar bee tree.

Sometime around 1830 a group of young boys chopped down this ancient tree to get at the honey. One of those boys was young Martin Rice, who soon afterwards went to Missouri with his family. Some sixty years later Rufe Rice cut into the log and found that the red cedar was not at all decayed.

Realizing the sentiments which the venerable poet in Missouri attached to anything from East Tennessee, Rufe carved a walking cane from this wood and sent it to the poet, Martin Rice. Upon receiving this staff, he wrote the following poem.



MARTIN RICE OF LONG JACK, MISSOURI (1814-1903)

One of seven children of Enoch and Mary Rice, Martin went with his parents from Big Valley to Jackson County, Missouri as a lad. Here he became a well-known writer and poet. He was also a successful surveyor, mathematician, nurseryman, and farmer. His descendants are to be found throughout the Midwest.

THE CEDAR WALKING-CANE

Beside a stream in Tennessee
There stood an ancient cedar tree,
And in that tree the bees had made
A home, and plied their busy trade.
Mischievous boys were there about,
And saw them passing in and out;
They cut the tree to get the hoard
The honey bees within had stored.
Full sixty years have passed away;
Part of the trunk is there today,
But little, if at all, decayed,
And from that log this staff was made.
'Twas carved by friend in Tennessee,
And as a present sent to me;
One of the few remaining boys
Who now survives and life enjoys.
The other ones have long ago,
Been called by death from scenes below;
Been summoned to their lasting rest,
We trust, in mansions of the blest.
And now, as on this staff I lean,
My thoughts are carried to the scene
Of youthful friends in youthful day,
Eight hundred miles and more away.
That Cousin dear who sent the staff,
My prayers shall be in his behalf;
Few be his sorrows, few be his cares,
When he, like me, is full of years.
And may I hope, when I am gone,
The staff that I am leaning on
Will speak to some surviving one
Of me when all my work is done?

Rufe Rice was one of the last of his type. Honest, proud, and hardworking, he was so completely independent that he accepted favors from no man. Every person who ever knew him would concur with that cogent phrase which Teddy Roosevelt used to describe him. Indeed he was "the type of American in whom one could believe."

DESCENDANTS OF JAMES RUFUS RICE

I. Willie Longmire Rice

Born September 4, 1893, this firstborn child lived only ten days.

II. Nettie Rice

Nettie Rice was born September 5, 1894, and died on March 3, 1911, at the age of fifteen.

III. Mattie Rice Weaver

Born August 16, 1896, Mattie lived in the Big Valley area with her husband, Curtis Weaver, until they moved from the Norris basin in the fall of 1934. At this time she and her husband, who had been a merchant in Big Valley, moved to a farm near Martel adjoining the one purchased by her father. Presently living with a daughter in Washington, D. C., she has been in poor health for some time. Mattie and Curtis Weaver had the following children.

Eulah Emiline Weaver Madison (B. July 5, 1919) Eulah was born in Big Valley in the home of Rufus Rice, her grandfather. Her father, at the time, was away from home, a soldier who had served in the first World War. Eulah attended Hill Academy school nearby, and later moved with her parents to Martel. She worked as a textile inspector for the Applachia Textile Mills in Knoxville for some fifteen years. She has worked at Oak Ridge, and at various places on the West Coast during the time her husband served in the Marines in the second World War. She managed the Holiday Inn Restaurant in New Orleans during the time her husband operated a business there. Presently she is employed by the Holiday Inn in Louisville, Kentucky.

Eulah is married to Harold Madison of Knoxville. Presently engaged in the banana wholesale business in Louisville, Harold has operated similiar businesses in New Orleans and Knoxville. They reside at 4304 Naomi Drive, Louisville 19, Kentucky. While they have had no children, Eulah has one son, James Irwin, by a previous marriage to Homer Irwin.

Dollie Loretta Weaver Brown (B. Aug. 23, 1922) Born in Union County, Dollie attended her first school there in Big Valley. She obtained a part time job at thirteen and worked her way through Farragut High School and National Business College in Knoxville. She worked for nine years as a secretary for D. M. Rose and company in Knoxville before marrying Hugh Brown

on May 16, 1948. A native of Kentucky, Brown joined the Navy at seventeen and served four years during the second World War. He later served an additional two years in the Navy during the Korean conflict. He has worked with the Cherokee Textile Mills for fifteen years, and is presently technical superintendent there.

Dollie possesses a flare for writing and composes poetry as a hobby. The Browns make their home on Millwood Drive in Sevierville, Tennessee—near the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. They have two children: Marsha Loretta Brown who was born May 18, 1950, and Robin Beverly Brown, born April 25, 1955.

Mary Jean Weaver Smith (B. Jan. 18, 1926) Also born in Union County, Mary Jean first attended Hills Academy there, and later Farragut High School near her home at Martel. She later worked for Miller's department store in Knoxville, and from 1946 until 1952 she lived in San Francisco.

In October of 1955 she married Austin G. Smith of Kodak, near Knoxville. After attending the University of Tennessee for some three years, he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington. Presently he has a very responsible government position with offices in the capitol building. He accompanied former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to Costa Rica shortly before the latter's death.

Mary Jean has the following children by a former marriage to Daniel A. Hicks Jr.: Larry Bruce Hicks, born in October 1954; Charlotte Ann Hicks, born September, 1946; and Steven Allen Hicks, born April 25, 1952. The children attend school in Alexandria, Virginia, the family home. The family resides at 3935 Londonderry Drive.

Mildred Pauline Weaver Woody (Born Oct. 10, 1930) Like her sisters, Mildred was born in Big Valley on land first owned by Old Henry Rice, her great, great, great, great-grandfather. She attended both elementary and high school at Farragut. She married Robert Woody of Knoxville. They make their home at 702 Hudson Avenue, Hampton Park, Lockport, Illinois. This is a suburb of Chicago, and he is employed in that city. They have one child, Robert Wayne Woody, who was born in 1954.

Jack Hubert Weaver (Born July 1, 1932) Although born in Union County, Jack left his ancestral home at a very early age—when the building of Norris Dam resulted in the family moving to Martel. Jack attended and graduated from both Farragut Ele-

mentary and Farragut High School. He also completed a welding course in Knoxville.

He served two years in the U. S. Army during the early 1950's, part of which time was spent in Germany. He was employed by Dempster Brothers in Knoxville, and later moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where he works on various construction jobs. He was employed by a firm which was responsible for the face lifting and remodeling of the capitol building. He is married to the former Betty Roberts, a native of the Farragut area, and like Jack, a graduate of Farragut High School. They have two children, Dianne and Dickey.

IV. Martin Zero Rice

Martin Zero Rice was the only son of Rufus and Anne to live to adulthood. He was born February 11, 1899, and died January 18, 1934. He married Ethel Rutherford, and to this union was born a son, Ivon. He is unmarried.

Few young men of Big Valley had a more inquisitive mind than did Martin Rice. His sister, Sally, recalls that he excelled in almost every subject which was offered in the little one room school which he attended. "No one could ever spell him down," she said, referring to the old fashioned spelling bees.

Out of an oatmeal box and other items which he secured at various places, Martin, with Rufe's assistance, rigged up a radio, reputed to have been the first in the area. He made a phonograph and designed a means of making records for it. He delighted in capturing people's voices and in surprising them by playing the recorded voice. He once made a clock whose entire intricate cogs were carved of wood.

Martin was keenly interested in his pioneer forefathers, and spent a good deal of time in traveling up and down the valley securing genealogical data from the older residents. He never especially enjoyed tending the old mill; and when he did, he often kept a book handy to turn to in spare moments.

V. Mossie Rice

Born September 10, 1901, Mossie died of consumption on May 28, 1917, at the age of sixteen.

VI. Sally Rice Northern

The youngest of six children, Sally Rice was born August 5, 1905, in Big Valley. Her father was then forty-five years of

age. "I can only remember my parents," Sally stated somewhat sadly, "in their later years."

For as long as Rufus Rice lived, his daughter Sally cared for him in the most kind and loving manner. Some few years after he died, Sally married Clifford Northern who now operates part of the farm owned by Rufus.

By her own admission Sally lives a great deal like her pioneer predecessors. I visited her recently, entering by means of the kitchen door. I was surprised that she recognized me after so many years, and I was amused by her greeting.

"Where have you been?" she inquired as though I had been out but a few minutes. "I thought you had forgotten me," she said without any trace of a smile.

"Do you know how long it has been since I was here?" I asked, expecting to take her off guard.

"It's been almost thirteen years, I guess," she retorted quickly. And she was right. It had been just that long.

It was a cold, raw day in January, and she insisted that I draw near the little wood stove in the sitting room while she "set up" supper. I noticed that she removed the eye from the stove in the kitchen and placed the little iron skillet directly over the leaping flames. I had not seen this done in a long time.

Soon the home-mixed sausage and the fresh eggs were cooked, and she placed them on the huge table alongside an array of other food left from their own supper.

In the corner of the spacious kitchen was the huge wooden meal chest which Rufus had fashioned as a young man. It was large enough to store a year's supply of flour and meal for an ordinary family. A long buckeye dough-tray hung appropriately alongside the meal chest. It, too, had been carved by her father. A heavy iron tea kettle sat on the stove, and from it the steam escaped slowly and softly.

A half mile south of the tree-shrouded farmhouse one could glimpse the heavy traffic on Highway 70, one of the state's busiest. And a short distance to the north came the faint drone of the freight trucks as they made time on one of the South's longest stretches of the great Federal Highway System. But the immediate environs of the old Rufus Rice farm remained largely unchanged. Sally Rice liked it that way.

Rebecca Rice Hankins

The life of Rebecca Rice was destined to be one filled with hardship and grief—and death. Becky, the second child of Henry and Sally Rice, as her older brother Rufe, was born in the little log cabin near the head of Lost Creek. She attended the Witt School where she learned to read and write.

When Dicky Longmire, Becky's great uncle, moved into the community from Andersonville, he brought with him a young hired hand, Robert Hankins. As a young boy, Sill recalls visiting in the home of his Uncle Dicky with his mother and sisters. "It wasn't too many months," Sill said, "before Becky married that Hankins boy. He was a fine hardworking boy from a little poor ridge farm where the town of Norris stands today."

The young couple moved into the little log house on the eighty acre tract belonging to Henry Rice. Here in the same cabin where she was born, Becky bore nine children—all boys. Five of the boys died in their childhood or youth.

Rob Hankins was a tall, lanky man who could turn off more work than almost anyone in the neighborhood. While most men worked for seventy-five cents a day, the farmers gladly paid him \$1.25. He was especially noted for his proficiency in cradling wheat.

Rob Hankins liked to "run the river," I have heard Sill say. "People liked to hire him to go down the river because he was such a good worker. One time he took sick while riding a log raft to Chattanooga," Sill remembers, "and when he got back into Knoxville he had double pneumonia.

"Well, he was riding a wagon home, and he got so bad that he stopped off at Buckley McAffey's to stay all night. McAffey was a cousin of his," Sill added. "Hankins sent word back to Big Valley by the other men on the wagon to have a horse sent for him the next day. I remember," Sill recalls vividly, "when Bob Hankins rode back home—he was just about dead. Well, Becky and all the women started making tea and all sorts of home remedies. But in just a day or two Rob died. It was so cold, and the ground was froze so hard that they had to burn a log heap to thaw the ground enough that they could dig the grave."

In the meantime the Hankins family had moved to the vicinity of Lost Creek Academy; and after her husband died, Becky lived on there for a while. "She had a black horse," Sill stated, "and a cow, and a young heifer; but the boys were too young to

do anything much, and Becky sold her farm and everything at a public auction.

"Later on," Sill reminisced, "Becky decided to buy some land; and Mack Burney, the pack peddler, told her about a three hundred acre farm up at the edge of White Creek. I went up there with my sister," Sill continued, "to see the old man named John Allen who owned the land. Old John Allen was ninety-three years old, and a Civil War veteran—he had helped Andrew Jackson take the Cherokee to Oklahoma many years before that. He had cut his third set of teeth, they said, and his second eyesight had come back.

"Well," Sill recalled a little preoccupied, "we sat there on the front porch of his little cabin and the old man pointed out the boundaries of his farm. It was mostly growed up in yellow pines and sedge. It was a kind of poor ridge land."

Becky Hankins did not have anyone to help grub and fence three hundred acres of land, and she did not buy the Allen place. Some time later she bought a little place in the valley near her father's home and was planning to move on it when she became ill.

"Becky was staying with us," Sill continued. "I had got up early one morning and was pulling fodder over near the old Cas Wilson place when I saw one of Becky's boys riding my daddy's old blind mare as fast as she would go. 'Where in the world are you going in such a hurry?' I asked?

"'Mother is about to die,' Ernest said. 'I'm going to get Dr. Wilson.'"

Dr. Wilson came and found the young widow in excruciating pain. He diagnosed the case as being "cramp colic." There was little he could do, and Becky Hankins died an agonizing death in her mother's home. "I nearly know that Becky had appendicitis," Sill said. "Nobody ever heard of it then—they just called it cramp colic.

"Becky left four young boys when she died," Sill related sadly. He choked up and was unable to talk—then he said, "and now those four boys are dead too. All of Becky's nine boys are dead.

"Worth, the oldest boy, went to live with Tom Baker and Jane. He started working in Knoxville, and later went to Cairo, Illinois, where he put up an awning business of some kind. He had one little girl, I think, when he died. Hattie, his wife, never married again that I ever heard of.

"Ernest, the second oldest boy, married a Robinson girl from Lost Creek. That boy took his wife and moved to Kokomo, Indiana; and she was later burned to death when their house caught fire. Ernest came back to Tennessee for a visit with his three children after his wife died. He told us how it happened.

"But he was weak breasted," Sill commented, "and he died of consumption soon after he went back to Indiana. I reckon his children are still up there somewhere. I never hear from them."

Sill paused before going on with the story of his sister's family. "Leonard was the next boy," he finally said. "He moved to Humbolt, Iowa, and married a girl up there—Mary I think was her name. Leonard was farming for his father-in-law when he took sick and died. Mary raised their little boy but never married again. I don't know where they are now.

"Curtis was raised by Ida and Bart Hill. He married in Kokomo and went to Minnesota with his father-in-law. He came in here about ten years ago and spent several nights here with Ibbie and me. But he died soon after he returned to Minnesota, I heard. I reckon his wife and son live up there somewhere."

Such was the unhappy story of the family of Robert and Becky Hankins. Five of their beloved sons died in their childhood and were buried in little wooden caskets in the Lost Creek Cemetery. The remaining four boys died in early adulthood, or in the prime of life.

Somewhere, perhaps in the midwestern cities, there are doubtless several descendants of Rob and Becky Hankins. It would be interesting to contrast their mode of living with that of this young couple who first started their family in the little one room log house on the poor eighty acre tract at the head of Lost Creek some seventy-five or eighty years ago.



SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF HENRY RICE

Sill Rice is shown here with his older brother, J. Rufus Rice and three of his sisters. From left to right are Lou Rice Rogers, Jane Rice Baker, and Anne Rice Sharp. This picture, taken in the early 1940's at a reunion held at the Old Rice Gristmill near Norris Dam, appeared in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. Sill is the only survivor of this group.

Neva Jane Rice Baker

Jane Rice was born only two years after the pillaging troops of the great Civil War had ceased their marauding raids in Big Valley. The date was January 14, 1867, and she was the sixth child of Henry and Sarah Longmire Rice.

Little is known of her early life except that she grew up in the pleasing environs of the pioneer type homeplace of her ancestors. A significant event in her life occurred when, in August 1890, a very large crowd gathered in the Lost Creek Community to attend the annual Primitive Baptist Association Meeting. This quasi-religious, quasi-social occasion drew together a great throng of people from dozens of different church congregations.

The Rice home, like others in the neighborhood, became host to many worshipers who had traveled from afar. Among those lodging at Henry Rice's place for this particular three day meeting was one Thomas Baker, a young but well known minister of the faith.

It was on this particular occasion that a photographer asked Jane Rice, a slender whisk of a girl weighing only ninety-five pounds, to pose with young Thomas Baker. Although the devout minister had given no prior thought to the prospects of matrimony, he made a silent vow, according to a later admission, that he would some day marry Jane Rice.

Two years later Elder Thomas Baker made good his unspoken promise to himself. On Sunday, July 10, 1892, he was married to Neva Jane Rice at the home of her father. Elder Sillus Petree, a fellow minister, performed the ceremony.

The newly married couple moved into a large and stately appearing log house, which, even then, had been in the Baker family for three generations. This impressive hewn log structure stands today as a worthy reminder of the great skill and ingenuity possessed by those pioneers who built it there over a century and a half ago. Standing protected by mountains that almost surround it, this patriarch of log houses is still occupied by the Baker family; Henry, son of Jane, and his wife Ulah, and Tiny, only daughter of Jane and Thomas Baker. The home is located in Knox County, but within one mile of Union County, and within two or three miles of Anderson County.

Located midway between the Lost Creek Community and the City of Knoxville, the Baker place came to be a favorite for those wanting a night's lodging or a hot meal. Jane soon learned, she

later told her granddaughter Kay, to cook a little extra and to preserve the left-overs in case a Big Valley friend happened in.

Consistent with the Rice characteristics, Jane possessed a sense of humor for as long as she lived. She often related an incident which happened concerning her preacher husband during one of his services.

Being a tall man of over six feet, Tom never liked to remain in the pulpit during his sermon; but instead often came down nearer to, and on the level of, his congregation. Once, while in a strange church, a very long-legged man sat at the steps leading from the pulpit to the congregation with his legs crossed in such a manner as to prevent the preacher from passing.

The preacher became more exuberant, and subconsciously Tom started to leave the stand. Each time he attempted to do so, he was blocked by the man sitting near the steps to the pulpit, for this was his custom. Once Tom almost got by, but the determined gentleman only extended his legs a little farther.

The dedicated preacher, being so absorbed in his exhortation, did not consciously realize the existence of the obstacle, nor his resulting frustration. His preaching became more turbulent, and in pointing out some insidious sin he exclaimed, "I just might be tramping on someone's toes." And in making this point the lanky preacher had risen upon his toes. And when he suddenly let all his weight down, he landed squarely on the foot of the gentleman who had so aptly blocked his path. The obstinate man on the stand arose immediately and joined the congregation, and Preacher Tom continued with his sermon.

On March 6, 1925, Thomas W. Baker died in the same house in which he was born. He was sixty-seven years old. Rev. H. H. Oaks of Loyston who conducted the funeral of his friend and fellow preacher wrote the following eulogy of Preacher Baker in the Primitive Baptist Association minutes.

The unworthy writer preached his funeral to the largest crowd that I ever saw at a funeral. He was greatly loved. He raised an excellent family who are loved by all who know them. In all the troubles that have come among the Baptist he stood firm; yet he was so kind and gentle with other people that he won their confidence. He was ready to lend a helping hand to his neighbor, and in sickness his equal is rarely found.

This writer has visited Aunt Jane Baker's place many times over a period of more than twenty years. I remember her as one of the warmest and most congenial little women that I ever knew. Always wearing a fancy little apron, and the old-type bonnet, she took an active part in the affairs of the farm. I have watched her skimming molasses on the hill above the house, and I have seen her picking beans from the rich garden in front of the house. I have visited her when she probed gently around the flowers near the stone wall at the edge of the yard, and I have talked with her on cold nights beside the huge open fire.

Although my visits were few, and sometimes a year or more apart, she never failed to recognize my voice even when she lost her eyesight. The last time I saw her she was sitting in her own room. And although it was the middle of the summer, an oak log smoldered slowly in her fireplace. She was ninety-five at the time, and was sprightly as a child when I introduced her to some relatives from Missouri whom she had never before seen.

A short time later I stood in the little family cemetery above the ancient log house and watched them bury Aunt Jane. It was a cold misty day and the surrounding mountains looked grey and desolate and without life. But the cemetery plot was clothed with bluegrass that looked preposterously green against the completely dormant background. They laid Aunt Jane to rest; and when my grandfather came from under the tent after seeing his sister and neighbor for the last time, he looked pale and sad. And I couldn't tell whether his face was streaked with tears or with the blowing, winter rain.

DESCENDANTS OF JANE RICE BAKER

I. Tina Baker

The first child born to Jane and Thomas Baker was named Tina. The date was July 22, 1893. Having finished the eighth grade at a nearby elementary school, she then attended high school at Gibbs. Although this was only a few miles away, she boarded in the community as there was little means of transportation at that time.

Tina worked for some ten years for a clothing concern in Knoxville; and she worked in the homes of people she knew in the Knoxville area. But for the most part she remained in the great log home of her mother, and with her brother Henry and his wife Ulah. The work of the farm was not foreign to her, and she was as handy at the dairy barn as she was picking blackberries in an isolated glade. Having never married, she still lives in this log house built some five or six generations ago.

II. Rebecca Baker

Born January 16, 1895, Rebecca died unmarried at the age of only twenty years, on July 18, 1915.

III. Henry Baker

Henry Baker was born August 23, 1900. He grew up on the ancestral homeplace, acquiring many of the skills and much of the ingenuity possessed by his pioneer progenitors.

As a young man he went to Kansas to work as a farmhand, but returned at the end of the first season. On November 30, 1935, he married Ulah Hill, daughter of O. L. and Attie Tindell Hill. This writer recalls watching with fascination Henry working in his board covered blacksmith shop. I remember seeing him shoe a team of horses with all the dexterity which a professional possesses. And I remember watching him put the steel tires on my grandfather's wagon wheels, and sharpening the plow points for Grandpa's plows. He was equally adept at making molasses or repairing a neighbor's clock.

Bonnie Kay Baker Lett (Born October 23, 1936) The only child of Henry and Ulah Baker, Kay was the last of several generations of children to be born in the pioneer vintage type log house. Being the only child of her parents, and having been reared in the house with her grandmother and unmarried aunt, Kay was not wanting for care or lack of attention.

She attended the small Wood-Hill School nearby, but later transferred to Halls Elementary. During her four years at Halls High School, she was an honor student, and active in 4-H Club work. She was chosen as the Daughters of American Revolution representative in 1954, her senior year.

Kay worked at the Oak Ridge Post Office while completing two years at the University of Tennessee. On July 7, 1956, she married Basil Lett of Anderson County. He is an employee of

Union Carbide at Oak Ridge. They live in the Hillvale Community near Clinton, and have the following children: James Monroe Lett, born December 18, 1957; John Edward Lett, born February 21, 1959; and Frank, born November 29, 1961.

IV. Lloyd Baker

The last of four children, Lloyd was born November 12, 1903, at the Baker homeplace. For many years he has alternated between working at a chemical plant in Knoxville and farming a portion of the original homeplace where he lives. At various times he has also worked as a carpenter in the area.

He is married to the former Mary Lee Hayes, daughter of the late Luther and Laura Hayes. They have two children, Ruth and Howard.

Ruth Baker (Born February 18, 1933) Ruth attended Wood-Hill Elementary School, only a short distance from her home, and later graduated from Halls High School. She also graduated from Knoxville Business College. Still living with her parents on Thomas Weaver Road, she is completing her eleventh year as an employee with Coleman's Heating and Air Conditioning Company in Knoxville.

Howard Baker (Born Dec. 27, 1936) After receiving his elementary education at Wood-Hill and Greenhill Schools, Howard transferred to Halls High School from which he graduated. He has spent a year in the U.S. Air Force, part of which he served in Germany. In addition to his farming activities, he has been employed at a chemical company in Knoxville. He, too, lives with his parents.

Annie Rice Sharp

On the evening of March 2, 1869, Henry Rice took his goose quill pen in hand and recorded in the family Bible the birth of his newborn daughter, Sarah Annie Rice. The young child grew to adulthood among her many relatives and neighbors in the peaceful atmosphere of Big Valley. There is nothing to indicate anything other than a normal happy childhood for Annie Rice. Only the deaths of her several sisters tended to thwart the growth of her cheerful and happy development in the little community of Lost Creek.

As a young lady Annie was described as being "a beautiful dark-eyed girl." Whether or not this was an appropriate description, it is reasonable to assume that young Pierce Sharp thought so, for in 1892 he took Annie for his wife. I have heard Pierce laugh and declare that when he married, he "got a hundred pounds of Rice for \$1.50 with the sugar thrown in." At the time of her marriage, Annie was twenty-two years of age—Pierce was one year and one day younger.

The following account of the wedding of Pierce and Annie Rice Sharp was printed in the September 15, 1892, issue of the *Union County Eagle* shortly after they were married in Maynardville.

Mr. E. P. Sharp, after due reflection of his state of life, decided, notwithstanding his kind parents, brothers, and sisters, that without a still closer tie, his future life would not be sufficiently happy without the gentle voice, and without the rosy lips being pressed modestly to his, while he would hold the angelic form who captivated his heart, and hers throbbed within his own bosom in his embrace, all would be dark. So he was united to Miss Annie Rice, on the 11th. E. P. (Pierce) is an industrious farmer, and Annie an excellent young lady. We wish them a happy and successful life.

Elbert Pierce Sharp was the son of Sterling Sharp, a descendant of the earliest pioneers in Big Valley. As a young man Pierce was variously a farmer, miller, and sawmill operator. After having married, he operated a country store, or in the lingo of the valley folk, "sold goods." The sugar, calico, and other items which he sold, he hauled from Knoxville in a wagon—a trip requiring four or five days.

Shortly after the young couple were married, Pierce built a small house where they started housekeeping. A few years later he built another home on a gentle hill above Lost Creek. This was a large ten room structure generously adorned with elaborate wood-

en curlicues around the eaves. It was in this large house that most of the seven children were born.

In 1908, Pierce and Annie Sharp moved to the adjoining county of Anderson and onto a farm located on Mountain Road near Andersonville. This farm was situated in the same valley as the original Rice farm on Lost Creek, and bore a striking similarity. In both areas the landscape was often interrupted with limestone outcropping. The farm on Mountain Road was likewise well clothed with bluegrass and was well set in red cedars. The eastern boundry of the farm was the top of Lone Mountain.

While hauling their household possessions over the narrow rocky roads to their new farm, a mirror fell from one of the dressers, breaking into a hundred pieces. Half joking, Annie predicted seven years of bad luck. Although Pierce and Annie were not superstitious, they did have seven years of bad luck; for within that period of time they watched their second house burn to the ground, and they saw three of their children die. Esta and Letha died within four months of each other, and Cary Lou was born dead in 1910.

Only three of the seven children, Charles, Mattie, and Nema, lived to adulthood. And of these only one survives today. Charles died on a farm in Western Kansas, leaving his wife and three children. Mattie Anderson died in Michigan at the age of forty-two. Nema, the only survivor, married Ernest Hale and lives presently on a farm in a beautiful home near Knoxville.

Nema Idress Sharp Hale, by whom much of this information was furnished, lays claim to having been the ugliest baby her parents had. Upon looking at her, Pierce was alleged to have said to his wife, "Ma, if we can't beat this, we ought to quit."

I recall Aunt Ann as an exceedingly gentle little woman whom the neighboring children loved almost as much as they did their own mothers. I remember talking with her in her old days—when she had outlived all but one of her seven children. And even then she seemed content and happy. She always displayed a great pride in the Rice family, and she often talked of her pioneer predecessors on Lost Creek.

Pierce was one of the most jovial men I ever met. There was seldom a time when he was not laughing and apparently enjoying life to the ultimate. He enjoyed working on the picturesque little farm on Mountain Road, and there was not a mattock or feedbasket around the barn left out of place.

When Pierce and Annie grew too old for the farm, they retired to Knoxville where they died. They had often prayed that one would not be left long without the other. On January 4, 1955, Aunt Annie passed away. Although blind, Uncle Pierce was in very good health. Yet in six weeks he was bed fast; and in nine weeks, March 16, 1955, he was dead. Their prayer was answered even in death.

DESCENDANTS OF ANNIE RICE SHARP

I. Charles D. Sharp

The oldest child and only son of Annie and Pierce Sharp, Charles was born in 1894. He died in Kansas at the age of thirty-eight. Charles and Rebecca Sharp had the following three children: Daunita Sharp Ubben, Deloris Sharp Gilley, and Dean Max Sharp.

II. Letha Lillian Sharp

Born in 1896, Letha Sharp died in 1910 at the age of fourteen.

III. Esta Beatryce Sharp

Born in 1898, Esta died at the age of fourteen.

IV. Elberta Sharp

Born in 1900, this fourth child of Annie and Pierce Sharp died at the age of eighteen months.

V. Mattie Cleo Sharp Anderson

Mattie Sharp was born in Union County on July 5, 1902. When she was but six years old, the family moved to their new farm in Anderson County. Here Mattie attended nearby Andersonville Academy, and later she graduated from Glen Alpine High School. She also completed a course at Knoxville Business College.

In 1926, Mattie married Lee Anderson, a native of Union County. The young couple moved to Trenton, Michigan, where Mattie died in April, 1943. They had two children.

Elbert Eugene Anderson (Born May 6, 1928) Elbert is a graduate of Michigan State University where he majored in engineering. He is presently living in California.

Anne Lee Anderson Smith (Born in 1930) Anne is married to Glenn Smith whom she met in Michigan, but who was originally of Campbell County, Tennessee. They were married in 1947, and they have the following four children: Karen Ann Smith, born October 1, 1950; Richard Smith, born October 31, 1952; Nancy Lee Smith, born October 13, 1954, and Gail Lynn Smith who was born April 17, 1955.

VI. Nema Idress Sharp Hale

Born in Union County on August 13, 1904, Nema, like her sister Mattie, came to Anderson County with her parents when she was only a child. She attended Andersonville Academy and later graduated from Clinton High School. It was while attending Carson-Newman College that she met young Ernest Hale, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Hale of a prominent Jefferson City family. They were married June 1, 1927.

After both Nema and Ernest had graduated from Carson-Newman, they attended graduate school at the University of Kansas. Later they both taught for two years in Utica, Kansas. He was coach and she taught history and English.

After moving back to Tennessee, near Knoxville, Nema started contributing to several Baptist periodicals. For thirty years she has written articles and lessons for thousands of such publications. Presently she does substitute teaching in Knoxville. Nema and Ernest Hale have one son, Gene.

Gene Sharp Hale (Born October 21, 1928) Born in Knoxville, Gene is a graduate of Jefferson City High School and the University of Tennessee, where he majored in business administration. He served some three years in the United States Army. He is married to the former Flossie Little of Knoxville. Presently living in Cookville, Tennessee, Gene works as an insurance adjuster. They have two sons: John Little Hale, born November 31, 1958; and Robert Warren Hale born February 23, 1962.



SUMMER VISIT—1951

Ida Rice Hill is shown, at left, with Ibbie at her Corryton home. Bart, seen here with Sill, died only a few weeks after this picture was taken.

Martha Ida Rice Hill

At eighty-four Ida Rice Hill lives alone in her modest home near Harbisons Crossroads in Knox County, Tennessee. She is the only survivor of Henry Rice's nine daughters, and one of the two living children.

Born September 19, 1878, Ida Rice grew up in the pioneer type homestead founded by her great-grandfather, James Rice. She complained, somewhat amused, that her mother sternly limited her social activities to corn shuckings, wool pickings and church meetings.

"When I was sixteen," Aunt Ida confessed, "I slipped off and went up to Better Chance to a box supper. Well, Bart Hill, who I did not know at the time, was there and bought my box. We were both so bashful that we didn't hardly know what to do. We just sat there and ate that box of food without saying a word."

From this coincidental meeting of the young couple at the little community of Better Chance, there was formed a relationship which was to span more than half a century. On December 15, 1898, four years after they had met, Bart Hill and Ida Rice were married.

Bart was the son of Union and Sarah Martin Hill of Big Valley pioneer origin. Tradition has it that all the Hills in the area sprang from six brothers who initially came from North Carolina and settled near Lost Creek. Bart himself had made three or four trips to Missouri in his youth to work as a farmhand, but had always returned to Tennessee. I recall him in his older days as a warm and friendly man, short of stature, and well gifted in conversation. He died October 15, 1951, at the age of seventy-eight.

"When we were first married," Aunt Ida fondly recalls, "we lived in the old George Witt log house for one summer. We made a little crop there, and there's where Stella was born."

The young couple next moved to what was called the old Abe Keys place where they lived for another summer and cultivated another crop. Their second child, Esten, was born there but died before the year was out. In the meanwhile Henry Rice had died leaving Sally alone on the old homestead. Ida and Bart moved in with Sally Rice, and Ida cared for her mother until the latter died in 1912. It was here that two other children, Clun and

Fay, were born in the home built by their great, great, grandfather.

Aunt Ida was a prodigious worker, a characteristic which most aptly served her during the years that she cared for her family and her bedridden mother. There continued to be a constant flow of visitors to the Rice home, even after Sally lay helpless on her bed.

This was the era during which the log rafts were floated down the Powell and Clinch Rivers to Clinton and Chattanooga. Often a large raft would be floated out of Lee County, Virginia, or from the vicinity of Tazewell, Tennessee. In such instances a very large crew would be required on the narrow but treacherous Powell River. Upon reaching the confluence of the Powell with the Clinch, however, a smaller crew would be required to continue with the logs downstream. And so it was that the excess crew would come ashore at the forks of the rivers and walk back to their respective homes. On their way back up the valley they passed the Rice home where they almost invariably stopped for meals or lodging—or both.

"One night," Aunt Ida recalled as she sat close to her own little stove, "a big bunch of loggers came by about nine o'clock. They said they were looking for a place to stay all night. There were eleven Negroes and one white man," Aunt Ida sort of whispered. "And that's the reason nobody wanted to keep them. But Mother would never hear to turn anyone away hungry or tired."

This dauntless young woman set about the task of cooking and bedding down these twelve hungry laborers. Far into the night she fried meat and baked bread for the starved lumbermen. And at three o'clock in the morning she arose to prepare breakfast, for the loggers were rushing to get back to Tazewell where another raft awaited them. "I gathered up every sheet and every pillow case," Aunt Ida declared, "and spent the biggest part of the day washing them down at the spring."

In 1914 the log home which had been in the Rice family for six generations was torn down by Bart Hill to make room for a new frame house. The giant tulip poplar logs, hewn from virgin trees with the broad ax, were sold for the aggregate sum of \$2.50. They were used as a raft to carry green logs down the river to market.

Bart continued to cultivate the portion of the Rice farm which he had purchased from the heirs. In pretty much the same

fashion as the old pioneers before him, he raised corn and oats, pulled the fodder, put up hay, fattened hogs, and generally provided for the needs of the family. In 1935 Norris Dam was built at a point some fifteen miles to the southwest with the subsequent effect of inundating a good part of Big Valley. Bart and Ida Hill relocated on a sixty acre tract of land on Emory Road, near the community of Harbisons Crossroads. It is on this tract that Aunt Ida lives today in a small home alongside that of her daughter, Fay Anderson. She enjoys doing her own housework, and she takes pride in her independence, even at her advanced age.

I visited her recently with my grandfather. It was dark when we roused her from the small house, and she peered questioningly into the night in an effort to recognize us. "Do you know who this old man is?" I asked, nodding toward my grandfather and her older brother, who stood beside me.

"Yes," she said with a bit of jocularly, "I know the old man and the young one, too."

DESCENDANTS OF MARTHA IDA RICE HILL

I. Stella Pearl Hill

The first child of Bart and Ida Hill, Stella was born December 22, 1899, at Lost Creek. She attended Hill's Academy in Union County, and East Tennessee State Teacher's College at Johnson City. She taught four years at a one-teacher school in Union County named Pinnacle View. On February 16, 1923, she married James W. Loy, a teacher and member of an early and well respected family of Union County. He was a brother to the late Corum Loy, well known vocational agriculture teacher of Maynardville, and Harvey Loy, retired school man and former principal of Rule High School in Knoxville.

Jim and Stella Loy made their home near the village of Loyston in Big Valley until Norris Dam necessitated their moving in 1935. It was at Loyston that all of their six children were born. Six weeks after the Loy family moved to their new home on Emory Road in Knox County, Jim Loy died. Stella remained on the small farm and reared her children primarily from a few dairy cows.

In 1945, Stella married J. F. Clapp of Corryton. They make their home on a farm on Washington Pike. He is a retired farmer.

Georgia Lillian Loy Wright The first child of Stella and Jim Loy, Georgia was born March 27, 1924, at Loyston. She at-

tended school at Loyston, and later graduated from Gibbs High School. She married William P. Wright on August 23, 1942. He is a native of Corryton. He owns and operates a farm on Emory Road in that community. They have the following children: Dave Carlson Wright, born September 3, 1945; Richard Edwin Wright, born December 7, 1950; and Charles Floyd Wright, born January 18, 1955.

Fay Loy Spitzer Born August 8, 1925, at Loyston, Fay also attended the school at Loyston. After graduating from Gibbs High School, she married Leon Spitzer of Corryton on October 24, 1942. He is a labor union official in Knoxville. Their home is on Emory Road, and they have the following children: James Leslie Spitzer, born February 14, 1947; Phyllis Elaine, born January 11, 1950; and Martha Eleanor, born September 19, 1956.

William Floyd Loy Floyd, who was born October 5, 1927, spent much of his youth with his uncle, Corum Loy of Maynardville. He graduated from Maynardville High School and is married to the former Edna Gilbert, a school teacher.

Floyd is in charge of a crew of men whose job is to install fire towers in the area. He lives on a large farm near Maynardville. They have the following children: Evelyn Pearl Loy, born March 7, 1948, who is a student at the high school in Maynardville; and John Earl Loy, born February 28, 1949. He is an elementary school student.

Opal Eleanor Loy Thompson Opal, who was born in November 1929, graduated from Gibbs High School, as did her two older sisters. And as her sisters, she was very active in 4-H club work. She attended the University of Tennessee for four years. On September 16, 1949, she married James Paul Thompson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Paul Thompson of Washington Pike in Knox County.

Opal and James Thompson live on a farm and operate a dairy consisting of some seventy head of cows. They have the following three children: Calvin Eugene Thompson, born March 15, 1952, a student at Corryton Elementary; Jimmie Paul Thompson, born October 26, 1953, also a student at Corryton; and Edward Loy Thompson, born October 13, 1957.

II. Fay Hill Anderson

Fay was born January 26, 1906, in Union County. She married Ernest Anderson of the Big Sinks Area of Union County on July 15, 1928. They moved to Akron, Ohio, shortly thereafter.

The young couple soon returned to Tennessee where they lived with the father and mother of Ernest until the elder Andersons died. Since that time Ernest has worked with the Tennessee Valley Authority, as a streetcar motorman, and with the Fulton-Silphon Company in Knoxville. Anderson has been with the Fulton Company for some twenty years.

Fay and Ernest Anderson make their home on a small farm on Emory Road in the Corryton Community of Knox County. They have the following children:

William Harvey Anderson Born January 9, 1934, Bill graduated from Gibbs High School in 1951. He served with the United States Army in El Paso, Texas, and later in France. He is married to the former Wanda Jo Clapp, member of a prominent family of the Corryton area. Bill is employed with the Knoxville Utilities Board, and his wife works for a telephone company. Their home is on Maloneyville Road at Corryton.

Roy Keith Anderson Roy Keith was born February 9, 1939, near Blue Springs Church in Union County where his parents were living at the time. He graduated from Gibbs High School and is presently employed at a clothing company in Knoxville. He is married to the former Wanda Spitzer of Corryton. They live near their parents on Emory Road, and have a son, Michael Anthony Anderson, born May 8, 1960.

Martha Gail Anderson Born June 1, 1944, at Corryton, Martha Gail was graduated from Gibbs High School in 1962. She still lives with her parents, and is planning to enter Knoxville Business College in the near future.

III. Mack Clun Hill

The youngest child and only son of Bart and Ida Hill, Clun was born June 16, 1911, in the James Rice house in Union County. After having attended elementary schools in the area, he graduated from what was then called Andersonville Academy.

Clun is married to the former Bessie Graves, daughter of Wayne Graves, member of one of Union County's oldest families. (The Graves family has been discussed earlier.) Clun is employed at the gigantic Aluminum Company of America plant in Alcoa, and Bessie is a teacher at Halls Elementary School.

The family resides at 708 Fair Avenue, Fountain City. They have two children: Wayne, a senior at Central High School in Knoxville; and Boyd Hill, also a student at Central.

Louie Belle Rice

We might well imagine that Henry Rice went about his chores with an unusual air of enthusiasm and gusto on April 2, 1881. The geese fed noisily down on Lost Creek beneath the willows that had already sprouted tiny leaves; up in the cedar woodland the guineas sought patiently for beetles and bugs as they stirred from their winter's resting place. In the pasture fields the horses and cows picked at the fresh shoots of bluegrass, and the sheep varied their diet by browsing from one green sprout to another.

The scene on this spring-like morning in Big Valley can perhaps be described with words such as peaceful, tranquil, and serene. Doubtless Henry hummed a gay old tune as he carried corn to the hogs and noticed the swelling buds on the apple trees planted there by his great-grandfather. He was especially happy because inside the great log house lay a tiny girl. Henry Rice was fifty-nine years old, and this was the last of his eleven children. They named the child Louie Belle Rice.

Being the youngest child, this little girl probably received more than her share of attention as she grew. When she reached the age of nineteen, she decided she would go to Knoxville to seek work. "This was during Cleveland's administration," Sill pointed out, "and many people said they were the hardest times we ever had."

"Louie set to work in a boarding house for a man named Satterfield," her sister Ida recalled. "She got \$1.50 a week."

"Yes," Sill added, "and she worked from twelve to fifteen hours a day without hardly even setting down. She just got about two cents an hour. I tell you them was hard times."

After several weeks of this grueling work, Louie Bell returned to her Big Valley home. And not long afterwards she married Marcellus Rogers, son of Dr. James Harvy Rogers, a Civil War veteran and a respected practitioner. The young couple started housekeeping in a small log house above Lost Creek. This writer recalls passing this picturesque cabin standing in a secluded bluegrass pasture at the edge of a cedar glade. I don't remember any access leading to this little cabin except for the crudest sort of wagon road; and I'm quite certain that this unpainted cabin has never been reached by an automobile.

Lou Rogers and her young husband lived in this peaceful home for some three years. Perhaps the first child, Coilah, was

born here. In the meantime young Marcellus Rogers had built an impressive new home on Lost Creek, some two miles above Henry Rice's place. Located near the present home of Governor Rogers, this sturdy dwelling stood and was occupied by Louie Rogers and her family until the area was flooded by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1935.

Marcellus Rogers operated a combination gristmill and sawmill on this, the upper headwaters, of Lost Creek. In 1918, this energetic miller died, leaving Louie with eight children to provide for.

This determined woman operated the mill part of the time herself, greeting the faithful patrons who rode their little mules for long distances out of the ridge country. The children walked down to the Lost Creek Academy where they received their education in the little one room school.

"It was sort of wonderful the way Louie got along with all those children," Sill said. "I reckon all of them helped out, though. One of her boys went to Oklahoma when he was just a little feller," Sill continued. "He's still out there I think. All of Lou's children are living."

When Norris Dam was built in 1935, all of the Rogers children had married except a son, Izell, and a daughter, Janie. And with these two children Lou moved to a fertile farm near Sweetwater, Tennessee. Here she lived until her death in 1949.

I recall visiting with my Aunt Lou Rogers in her huge farmhouse a short time before her death. Although this was the first and only time I ever saw her, I vividly remember her as an unusually pleasant and amiable woman. Others who knew her better have expressed the same feeling.

DESCENDANTS OF LOUIE BELLE ROGERS

I. Coilah Oreda Rogers Hammer

Born September 5, 1902, Coilah was the oldest child of Lou and Marcellus Rogers. In inquiring as to the origin of such an unusual name as Coilah, her sister Lorene said, "Ask your grandfather how Coilah got her name. I think he named her after a girl friend of his."

I did ask Sill about this, and he smiled, a little embarrassed. "Well, I was working for a threshing outfit in Oklahoma when I got a letter from Ida saying that Lou had a little girl baby. They wanted me to name it," Sill explained. "It was sort of a

custom," he said, "to let someone of the folks name the babies, especially the first baby.

"There was a little girl cooking for the threshing outfit who was an awful fine worker," Sill continued. "She was sort of a purty girl, too. Her name was Coilah Tuga, and so I just wrote back and said, 'call the little girl Coilah Tuga.'"

Here the old man paused a minute, apparently somewhat preoccupied. But he soon continued. "They did call her Coilah, but I never heard anything about Tuga. I guess they didn't like the Tuga part."

On November 18, 1925, Coilah married Clarence Hammer, son of Dr. James Marshall Hammer and Sarah Hill Hammer, both members of old Union County families. Although the elder Hammer had studied medicine in Louisville, Kentucky, and practiced to a limited extent in the area, he was also a nurseryman.

A former merchant, Clarence Hammer is now retired to a small farm on Luttrell Road near Knoxville. He is a brother to A. B. Hammer, prominent merchant and businessman of Knoxville with financial interests in different southern states. Coilah and Clarence Hammer have the following four children.

Charles Edward Hammer (B. Dec. 10, 1926) The oldest child, Charles is a veteran of World War II, and presently works with the Southern Railway. On August 5, 1950, he married June Collis, the daughter of Thomas Henry Collis and Effie Sharp Collis. Their children are as follows: Charles Gary Hammer, born June 19, 1951; Judy Elain, born July 3, 1953; and Sally Jo., born April 27, 1958.

Pauline Hammer Crawford (B. Sept. 17, 1928) Pauline, twin sister to Lorene, is a graduate of Knoxville's Central High School. She is a registered nurse, having graduated from Ft. Sanders School of Nursing, also in Knoxville. She is married to Robert Lamar Crawford, son of Dennis White Crawford and Mattie Stephens Crawford. An Air Force veteran of the second World War, Robert is now employed by Leopold and Orr, a Knoxville plumbing and heating firm. Pauline and Robert Hammer live near Knoxville on Tazewell Pike and have the following children: Karen Sue, born November 7, 1957; Louis Franklin, born February 5, 1959; and Teresa Maria, born July 26, 1961.

Lorene Hammer McDaniel (B. Sept. 17, 1928) Lorene, also a graduate of Central High, married Hugh McDaniel, son of Jessie Walter and Ada Taylor McDaniel. A former marine of

World War II service, McDaniel is persently employed by Rohn and Haas Chemical Corporation in Knoxville. Lorene is a housewife at their Knoxville home. They have four children: Carolyn, born Aug. 29, 1950; Barbara, born July 9, 1953; Tina Marie, born May 15, 1958; and Christine, born August 16, 1959.

James Rogers Hammer (B. March 8, 1934) Upon graduating from Central High School in 1953, James served in the U. S. Army Signal Corps—from 1956 until 1958. During the Berlin Crisis of 1961 he was again called into service; this time for one year. He is presently employed in the engineering department of the State Highway Commission. He is attending evening classes at the University of Tennessee.

II. Oral Rogers Booker

The second child of Lou Rogers, Oral was born July 18, 1904. She married Talmadge Leroy (Lee) Booker, member of a prominent family of Luttrell, in Union County. The family home is at Etowah where Booker is connected with the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. They have one child.

Ruth Jean Booker Rule (B. March 6, 1927) Ruth, the only child of Oral and Lee Booker, married Charles Warren Rule, operator of Rule Furniture Store in Etowah. They have the following children: Donna Caye, born January 24, 1947; Charles Douglas, born October 12, 1951; and Carole Jean, born July 18, 1957.

III. Izell Rogers

Izell "Bill" Rogers was born July 28, 1905. He lived with his widowed mother and operated the family farm both in Union County and in Monroe County until her death in 1949. In 1953 Izell married Mamie C. Presley of Knoxville. Employed with Singer Sewing Machine Company, Izell makes his home on Luttrell Road near Knoxville. They have no children.

IV. Lorene Rogers Sharp

The third child of Lou Rogers, Lorene was born September 1, 1907, in Union County. She married William Foster Sharp on September 15, 1936. He is a member of one of Union County's oldest families. They live on a small farm in the Karns community near Knoxville. Sharp is employed as a machinist at Oak Ridge. Their first son, Roger Bennet Sharp, died in 1950 at the age of thirteen. A second son, Charles Dean (Chuck)

Sharp, was born May 14, 1945. He is presently a senior at Karns High School.

V. Kermit Roosevelt Rogers

Kermit was born in the Big Valley section of Union County January 26, 1909, but left his native home as a young man to go west. He has lived in Oklahoma since that time. He married Grace Dorn Shaffer of Edgefield, South Carolina, June 18, 1939, at Hobart, Oklahoma. Kermit owns and operates a retail grocery in Anadarko, Oklahoma, and his wife Grace is employed as a secretary with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, at Anadarko.

Jack Stanley Rogers, the older son of Kermit and Grace Rogers, is a student at Oklahoma State University where he is majoring in business administration. He was born June 27, 1943, at Chickasha, Oklahoma. Thomas Alan Rogers, the younger son, was born September 23, 1945, in Anadarko, and is presently attending high school there.

VI. Clee Rogers

Born December 5, 1910, Clee was reared and still lives in the Sharps Chapel section of Union County near where his ancestors first settled in the wilderness. He is married to Minnie Johnson, a native of Union County. Clee operates a small farm and corn mill a short distance from where his father's original gristmill stood. They have two children: Marcellus, born October 12, 1940, and Troy, born October 24, 1942.

VII. Troy Treece Rogers

The seventh child and youngest son of Lou Rogers, Troy was born January 19, 1913. He served with the United States Army in Germany during the second World War, and is presently engaged in the restaurant business on Chapman Highway in Knoxville.

Troy is married to the former Gladys Griffin, presently an employee of the city of Knoxville. They have one son, Troy Ronald Rogers. He was born September 6, 1947, and is a student at Young High School in Knoxville.

VIII. Janie Belle Rogers

Janie, the youngest of the eight Rogers children, was born July 15, 1914. Along with Izell, she remained with her widowed mother for many years. She married James Charles McDaniel, Jr., of Sweetwater. Both Janie and her husband were employed by the Peerless Textile Mills of Rossville, Georgia, until his death in 1952. She lives alone in Rossville.

Descendants of Marcellus Moss Rice

I. Ruby Rema Rice Little

Ruby Rice was born on July 23, 1907, in the impressive home built by her parents. When only four she attended her first school in order to swell the enrollment to maintain the one room school. Her teacher was Gilly Woods, a big man, she recalls, who permitted her to sit on his lap as he taught the other students.

Later she attended another one room school held in an old cabin near Bethany Church. The children referred to the little building as the "sheep pen," because it at one time had been used to house a flock of sheep. This school was taught by her mother, Ibbie. Ruby later attended Hills School, but enrolled at Oakwood in Knoxville in the seventh grade.

She graduated from Central High School in 1925, and later from Knoxville Business College. After working two years as a stenographer at a local accounting and insurance firm, she became a student at the University of Tennessee. Using her business school training, she worked for much of her college expense money.

She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1932 with a major in Spanish. In 1934 she received her Master of Science degree from U. T. in botany. The next year she continued graduate studies in botany at the University of North Carolina.

Then Ruby accepted an assistantship from Cornell University to work toward her doctorate. For five years she served as assistant to Professor Herbert H. Whetzel, known as the father of American plant pathology. She completed all coursework requirements for the doctor's degree.

In 1941, Ruby returned to Tennessee, where she worked with the Forestry Division of the Tennessee Valley Authority at Norris. The following year she obtained employment with the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Beltsville, Maryland, and Washington, D. C.; afterwards she became junior plant physiologist. The bulletin, "Plant Growth Hormones," of which she was junior author, was published in 1942.

Ruby married Elbert L. Little, Jr., in Washington, D. C., on August 14, 1943. A botanist also, he has been in research work with the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, since 1934 and in Washington as dendrologist since 1942.

He was born at Fort Smith, Arkansas on October 14, 1907, but moved with his family to Muskogee, Oklahoma, in 1909.

Specializing in botany, he received his B. A. degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1927, and a B. S. degree from the same college in 1932. He received the M.S. degree from the University of Chicago, in 1939, and later he was awarded the Ph.D. degree.

Soon after their marriage during World War II, Ruby and Elbert went to Colombia, South America for a year and a half. Elbert was a botanist with the Foreign Economic Administration in the procurement program for cinchona bark, the source of quinine, the drug needed by the Army for treatment of malaria. Ruby, as histologist in the Bogota laboratory, studied cinchona barks and their anatomy.

In 1945 Elbert was transferred to Mexico as specialist in drug plants and insecticidal plants. The twin sons, Gordon Rice and Melvin Weaver, were born in Mexico City, on October 22, 1945. Soon afterwards Elbert returned to his position as dendrologist with the Forest Service in Washington where he has written many publications about trees and their identification.

Arlington, Virginia, just across the Potomac from the Capital, has been the home of Ruby and Elbert since 1946, except for a year in Venezuela in 1953-1954. Their daughter, Alice Conner, was born in Washington on November 11, 1947.

Since 1949 Ruby has been histologist with the Human Nutrition Division of the Agriculture Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, at Beltsville, Maryland. She does microscopic research on various foods, writes articles and bulletins, and is included in "Who's Who of American Women." She has been, along with the children, active in church work in Arlington.

The Littles make frequent trips to Tennessee to visit Sill; and he looks forward with great anticipation to seeing his three grandchildren from Washington.

Ruth Annette Rice Irwin The second of the two children of Sill and Ibbie Rice, Ruth was born December 17, 1909. Her first school was a one room affair taught by her mother.

After five years at Woods School, Ruth, along with her sister Ruby, was sent to Oakwood Elementary School in Knoxville because it was thought by the parents that the girls would have better educational opportunities there. During the sixth and seventh grades, Ruth attended school in Knoxville. Ruby, who was only two years older, lived with Ruth in a house in Knoxville belonging to Sill. They occupied only one room, while tenants

lived in the remainder of the house and kept an eye on the young girls.

Ruth returned to Woods School where she finished the eighth grade. She attended Halls High School, and later worked a year for her Uncle Goodlow, attending his child while his wife taught school. At the end of the year she returned to live with her parents.

At this time there were several small schools in the area, and most, if not all, the teachers came from outside the community. They found it convenient to board near the school. The Rice home came to be considered headquarters for these schoolmasters, and Ruth spent a good deal of time helping her mother cook for these lodgers.

During this time Ruth had become acquainted with a young man from the Loyston area of Big Valley. When he asked to take her to a singing at Concord, Ruth declined, explaining that her mother would consent only if her older sister Ruby accompanied them. The young man agreed, and when he came on the appointed Sunday, he brought along another young man for Ruby's date. His name was Glenn G. Irwin, himself a native of Loyston and son of Rev. John G. Irwin, a highly respected farmer and Methodist minister.

Some six months later Ruth and Glenn were going to singings themselves; and on December 24, 1929, in the abyss of the depression they were married. The young couple moved into the large Rice home, and when early spring came, Glenn started preparations for a crop. The following December their first son, John Rice, was born.

After the first year Glenn bought a portion of his father's farm in Big Valley. They built a house and moved onto this new farm. In January of the following year, in 1932, their second child, David, was born.

In 1935, Norris Dam was started, and it was not long before the people in the Loyston area knew they must find new homes; for Norris Lake would soon be forming. In January of 1936 the young Irwin family left Big Valley for their new home at Robertsville, in Anderson County. The house was dismantled and rebuilt on the new farm.

Seven years later, almost to the day, the building of Oak Ridge necessitated their moving again. They then bought the Sam Hill farm on Mountain Road near Norris. Here they live today, operating a dairy and tobacco farm.

John Rice Irwin (B. Dec. 11, 1930) I was born in the home of my grandfather, Sill Rice, and spent the first year of my life there with my father and mother. We then moved to a farm in Big Valley adjoining the ancestral home of my paternal grandfather, Rev. John G. Irwin. Here we lived until I was four, and here it was that those first distorted, but impressionable childhood memories were etched upon my mind.

I faintly remember the bedlam created in the valley when TVA came to buy the old homeplaces. A rather large clan of my family's relatives then moved some thirty miles to the southwest, to a little community known as Robertsville. This was in Anderson County.

For seven years we lived on this very beautiful farm consisting of over three hundred acres of meadows, level fields, rolling pasture land, and wooded mountain land. My grandfather and grandmother lived in an immense southern type house, and our family lived on the same farm, but in a smaller house.

Our grandfather acting as guide, my brother David and I explored every inch of the varied countryside. David, being just one year younger, started to school at Robertsville the same year as I. After the first year we transferred from Robertsville to Scarborough where we remained until we were in the sixth grade.

In preparation of the building of Oak Ridge in 1942, the government bought our land in much the same manner as they had done in 1935 when the TVA built Norris Dam. We then moved some twenty miles in the direction of where our old Big Valley home had been located.

My father bought a run-down farm on the Mountain Road near the town of Norris. Our land lay in Big Valley, and the farm extended to the top of Lone Mountain. It was on this and surrounding farms that I commenced my career as a trapper. I often started running my trap lines even before the neighboring farmers had arisen. I trapped the mink and muskrat on John's Creek, and on Buffalo Creek, and I trapped the skunk, 'possum, and sometimes the fox on the Lone Mountain knobs, and in the cedar glades. For several years trapping was my greatest interest and my main source of spending money.

David and I graduated from Glen Alpine Elementary School, and later from Norris High School. I was president of the Student Council there, and served as president of both the local and regional chapters of the Future Farmers of America. After high

school I attended Tennessee Polytechnical Institute, Lincoln Memorial University, and the University of Tennessee Law School.

When the Korean War developed I joined the army, and later requested service in the Infantry. I was trained as a rifleman in South Carolina and Georgia. Later I was assigned to duty in Germany, and traveled through twelve different countries.

After being discharged at Fort Knox, Kentucky, I attended and graduated from Lincoln Memorial University in history and economics. During this time I worked as a feature writer for the *Middlesboro* (Kentucky) *Daily News*. I obtained a fellowship from the University of Tennessee and received a master's degree from that institution in Political Science with a major in international law. Later I was elected Justice of the Peace and served two years on the Anderson County Quarterly Court.

I have taught at the University of Tennessee, Lincoln Memorial University, Middlesboro High School, Norris High School, Clinton High School, and have served as principal of Melbourne Elementary School (in Anderson County), and as principal of Lake City Elementary School in Lake City. Presently I am superintendent of Anderson County Schools, a system consisting of some eight thousand students.

To supplement my teacher's income I have operated a roadside fruit and vegetable market, a drive-in restaurant, served as president of Norris Memorial Gardens Inc., sold real estate, and graded correspondence papers for the University of Tennessee.

While attending LMU, I met and married Elizabeth Ann McDaniel, daughter of Ben and Ethel McDaniel of Kingsport, Tennessee. Her paternal grandfather had been a dentist in Tazewell, and her maternal grandfather and her maternal great-grandfather had both been sheriff of Lee County, Virginia.

We belong to Andersonville Methodist Church where I served as lay leader and teacher of the men's Sunday School Class. We have two children: Karen Ann, born October 30, 1955, and Cynthia Elaine, born January 27, 1959. It was for them that the story of Sill Rice was written.

David Rector Irwin The younger of two sons of Glenn and Ruth Rice Irwin, David was born January 3, 1932 in Union County, Tennessee. His birthplace was the small frame house where his father had built only a short time before. The house was located in Big Valley, and was built on a portion of the land which the Irwins had settled in pioneer days.

Being only thirteen months younger than his brother, John Rice, he overtook his older brother in size when their ages were two and three respectively. The two were inseparable companions in both work and play. Due to the fact that they almost always dressed alike during their early school years, it was thought by many that they were twins.

When David graduated from Norris High School in 1949, he chose to remain on the farm over entering college. Through his reading of various farm periodicals, and through his activities in various agricultural organizations, he has remained abreast with the latest and most progressive ideas in farming.

Presently he and his father own and operate three farms. Tobacco is grown every year, but their primary emphasis is given over to growing hay and maintaining pasture for their large dairy herd. They have the latest in mechanized equipment for their milking operation.

David is a member of the Farm Bureau Board for Anderson County, a member of the county's Soil Conservation Board, and is Sunday School superintendent at Andersonville Methodist Church. He is president of the Anderson Farmers Co-operative which he helped to organize in 1959. His progressiveness and loyalty to the farm was recognized a few years ago when he was chosen as the outstanding young farmer of the year from Anderson County.

David lives with his mother and father on the Mountain Road farm near Norris. He is engaged to be married to Carolyn Hobbs of Jonesville, Virginia. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and has been the Assistant Home Demonstration Agent in Anderson County for a number of years.

Rev. Thomas Weaver

Thomas Weaver, a minister of the Primitive Baptist faith, was well known and respected, not only in his native Union County, but throughout the Primitive Baptist church area. In addition to his preaching, he was a skilled carpenter and a successful farmer.

Born in the Powell River section of Union County, Thomas Weaver was the son of Timothy Weaver who, according to information acquired from W. H. Thomas, came from Halifax County, North Carolina, about 1820. Timothy Weaver married a daughter of Thomas Brantly, and to this union were born eleven children. They are given by Professor Thomas as follows:

1. John B. Weaver—married Elizabeth Hill
2. Charity Weaver—married John L. Shelby
3. Duly Weaver—first married Ananias Hill, second marriage to Ely Sorey
4. Elizabeth Weaver—married Gordon Weaver, her cousin
5. Thomas Weaver—married Saloma Catherine Shown
6. Melissa Weaver—married Hamilton Hill, brother to Ananias Hill
7. Letitia (Leety) Weaver—married "Can" Hill, brother to Hamilton and Ananias
8. Orville Weaver—wife's name unknown
9. Jacob Weaver—wife's name unknown
10. Emily Weaver—married Ransom Coffee
11. Ellen Weaver—married Lafayette Hill, son of Sanford and Rebecca Davis Hill; he was a cousin to "Can," Hamilton, and Ananias

The biographical sketch of the life of Thomas Weaver which appeared in the official Primitive Baptist publication indicates the respect and confidence which he enjoyed among those he worked with. The following account appeared in the bi-weekly paper, *The Primitive Baptist*, printed in Fordyce, Arkansas in 1919.

ELDER THOMAS WEAVER

Elder Thomas Weaver was born May 23, 1845; departed this life July 23, 1919, age 74 years and 2 months. Received a hope in Christ September 1867, joined the Primitive Baptist Church at Mossy Springs, Union County, Tenn., in November, 1869, by Elder William Bridges.

He was ordained to the full work of the ministry May 1872, by Elders William Williams and William Bridges. For a number of years he was moderator of the Powell's Valley Association, (Primitive Order), and was very highly esteemed by the brethren.

He was married to Adaline Wilson December, 1865. To this union two children were born, one of whom survives. Adaline Wilson Weaver died 1870.

December 8, 1872, he was again married to Saloma Catherine Shown, who preceded him to the home of the blessed June 3, 1918.

To this union 16 children were born, seven sons and nine daughters preceded him to the great beyond. Six sons, four daughters, twenty-five grandchildren and one great-grandchild still survive.

One brother and a sister, namely; Jacob Weaver, Lafollette, Campbell Co., Tennessee; and Mrs. Duly Sorey, Union Co., Tennessee, together with the children, church and a host of friends are left to mourn our great loss but we believe our loss is his eternal and happy gain.

He was a faithful and devoted Christian. He was true to his churches, sound in doctrine, always contending for the principles of the doctrine of Christ, yet with much love and good will to all.

He could surely say I have kept the faith, fought for the truth and finished my course with much zeal. He was one of the ablest defenders of practical godliness, and strongest advocate of salvation by grace, in the Powell's Valley Association.

All men of all denominations, loved him, though they did not love nor neither did they believe the sentiment he contended for. He contended for forty-eight years for those blessed principles.

His love and zeal never grew cold and it was his whole desire to do the will of his father.

He has left this world of sorrow and is sweetly resting with his blessed Savior whom he so faithfully served.

He enlisted in the Federal Army, Company G, 7th Reg., Tennessee Mounted Infantry, November 8, 1864, and was honorably discharged July 27, 1865.

The last few months of his life were spent with his daughter, (Mrs. M. M. Rice), where he received all the care and attention that could be administered but to no avail. During his stay here I, (Elder T. W. Baker), spent many nights with him. One night he called and had me put him on his chair and wanted to talk a while. The following are a few words in as short manner as I can arrange them:

Although he talked for one hour and a half yet we haven't space to tell all.

"Bro. Tom, we have spent many days together in talk and preaching, and I have often doubted being God's servant and wondered if I had been to strict in contending for these principles, but now I know that I am his servant and that these principles are the truth. My way is clear there's nothing in my way and I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Raising his hand and letting it fall on his knee while smilingly he said, "It doesn't seem that heaven itself could be any sweeter than these moments were to me. If it is, it will be sweet indeed. I don't want to complain or think my lot hard but if it were only God's will I wish the end now."

We only wish all of God's dear children could have heard him.

Funeral services were conducted by Elders H. H. Oaks and T. W. Baker Saturday, July 26. Here a number of his brethren and friends gathered to pay the last tribute of respect to this precious man and father.

His body was carried a mile to the Hill cemetery where he was quietly laid to rest from the troubles and heart-aches of this old

world until the Lord shall come to call the sleeping dust of his jewels to come and live with Him.

Children and Brethren this will be the sweetest meeting we have ever witnessed. Here we'll meet never to part again.

Let us trust the Savior to carry us to this sweet home where we can ever be with our loved ones and sing redeeming love forever more.

RESOLUTIONS:

Whereas, It pleased God in his wisdom to call from us our beloved brother and pastor, Elder Thomas Weaver;

And whereas, this precious man of God lived for forty-eight years an humble, zealous, true and devout member of the Primitive Baptist Church;

And whereas, his usefulness was universally felt, and his pious godly life wielded such influence for good in unifying the brotherhood and promoting the gospel of Christ to the unbuilding of Zion;

And whereas, we feel it our duty to express our deep regret and great loss in his death, yet though he be dead, he speaks to us when we remember his consecrated life and devotion to the church and cause of God;

And whereas, the children, together with the church have sustained such a great loss, we offer this tribute of respect and condolence, and order this memorial to be spread on our minutes of the association and that a copy be sent to all Primitive Baptist papers for publication.

Done by the order of Mt. Hebron Church will in session July 26, 1919.

T. W. Baker,
G. C. Vandagriff
W. M. Howerton.

About 1884, when Ibbie was only ten years old, Thomas Weaver traded his Union County farm to his cousin John Bridges for a farm near the Thomas Baker place in Knox County. Ibbie recalled that they moved to their new home on a cold, rainy day in February. They crossed Clinch River in a ferry. Riding in the spring-seat of the farm wagon, Ibbie carried her two year old brother, S. T., in her arms. Being ill, the infant cried almost constantly during the long and tiring trip.

"Old Grandma Weaver," I have heard Sill speak admiringly of his mother-in-law, "had ambition. She knowed how to manage and get things done, and she put those children to work."

The children soon learned frugality and self reliance. These traits enabled them to become successful and respected citizens in their respective professions and endeavors. The following list, taken from the family Bible, gives certain data of thirteen of the sixteen children of Thomas and Saloma Shown Weaver. (The two children by his first wife are not listed). I have taken the

spelling and dates as recorded, and have made no effort to authenticate their accuracy.

1. Ibbie Jane Weaver Rice B. Feb. 4, 1874
Married Marcellus Moss Rice on D. June 17, 1956
Jan. 24, 1904.
2. Mary Angaline Weaver Arms B. July 19, 1875
Married James Arms on Sept. 8, 1895 D. Jan. 15, 1919
3. Emma Catherine Weaver Claiborne B. Sept. 18, 1876
Married Henry Claiborne on Jan. 3, 1904 D. Jan. 5, 1962
4. William Asbury Weaver B. Nov. 5, 1877
Married Martha George on Jan. 18, 1900 D. May 22, 1922
5. Martha Anne Weaver B. Jan. 6, 1879
..... D. Apr. 23, 1880
6. Jamaca Florence Weaver Hill B. Oct. 1, 1880
Married Polk Hill on June 17, 1901 D. Nov. 6, 1904
7. Rachel Ausmus Weaver Claiborne B. Apr. 24, 1882
Married Luther Claiborne Oct. 11, 1899 D. Nov. 19, 1952
8. Silvanus Timothy Weaver B. May 31, 1884
Married Lucy Savage
9. James Rector Weaver B. Feb. 15, 1889
Married Gertridude Cawood
10. Arizona Bell Weaver Hall Lay B. June 1, 1886
Married Obadiah Hall on April 17, 1904—
after his death she later married David Lay
11. Carrie Reed Weaver B. Apr. 12, 1890
..... D. Feb. 8, 1891
12. Noonie Bowlin Weaver B. Oct. 4, 1893
Married Nella Freels on Nov. 24, 1915 D. May 10, 1949
13. Goodlow Weaver B. Apr. 29, 1893

Footnotes

CHAPTER I

1. DeWitt, William A., *History's Hundred Greatest Events*, "Norris Dam Ready; World Eyes TVA Plan," Grossett & Dunlap, New York: pp. 130, 131.

CHAPTER II

1. *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, Vol. III, p. 569.
2. Crozier, William Armstrong, *Virginia Colonial Militia, 1651-1776*. (Baltimore: Baltimore Southern Book Co., 1954), p. 99.
3. Saunders, William L., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Hale Printer, 1886), p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.* iii, Vol. V.
6. *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 588.
7. From the papers of L. D. Brewer who lives at 1811, E. 11 St., Long Beach, Calif.
8. "The Name and Family of Rice," Compiled by the Media Research Bureau of Washington, D.C., p. 2.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. Brewer, *loc. cit.*
12. From information collected by Mrs. B. C. Tompkins of 1211 Joseph Avenue, Nashville 7, Tennessee. She is a descendant of the early Sheriff Thomas Rice of Caswell County, N. C.
13. The Media Research Bureau, *loc. cit.*, p. 1.
14. From the notes compiled by Prof. W. H. Thomas, former school superintendent of Union County, and a leading authority on local history in the East Tennessee area.
15. Crozier, p. 143.
16. Moore, John N. and Austin P. Foster, *Tennessee, The Volunteer State, 1769-1923*, (Chicago & Nashville: S. J. Clark, 1923), p. 232.
17. From the letters of W. H. Thomas.
18. This spot is designated by a metal marker erected by the Tennessee Historical Society.
19. White, Robert H., *Tennessee, Its Growth and Progress* (Nashville: Robert H. White Publishing Co., 1952), pp. 206-208.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Turnbow, Silas and Maude Ina, *Charles Rice and His Descendants* (Eugene, Oregon: privately printed, 1957), p. 1.
22. Records of W. H. Thomas—this information is also given on a Tennessee Historical Society marker at the site of the Henry Rice mill.
23. Miss Clara Gutzman, a retired teacher and an enthusiast on Rice genealogy recently joined the D.A.R. on the basis of the Revolutionary War records of her ancestor, Henry Rice. She lives at 2003 Vagedes St., Fresno, Calif.
24. Haygood, John, *The Civil and Political History of Tennessee*, p. 68—taken from the above mentioned book, *Charles Rice and his Descendants*, p. 3.
25. Hawkins County Deeds, Book I, p. 114. (filed in the courthouse at Rogersville).
26. The following is a copy of Land Grant No. 490 made to Henry Rice. (This was made available by W. H. Thomas)

To all whom these Presents shall come, GREETINGS: Know ye, that we, for and in consideration of the sum of Fifty Shillings for

every hundred acres of land hereby granted, paid into our Treasury by Henry Rice, have given and granted and by these presents do give and grant unto the said Henry Rice a tract of land containing six hundred and forty acres lying and being in our County of Green on the north side of Clinch River in Bald Valley on both sides of Loss (sic) Creek, beginning at a hickory at the foot of the knoobs and running thence North forty-five degrees west two hundred poles crossing the creek. Then said course forty poles to the creek. Then said course one hundred and forty-eight poles to a stake. Then South four degrees West four hundred poles to the beginning.

This grant was signed at New Bern, North Carolina, by Governor Richard Spraight Dobbs, by his Secretary Glasgow. Henry Rice also received Grant No. 597, located on the north side of Holston River in Hawkins County and consisting of two hundred acres. This was dated July 12, 1794, and is recorded in Book III, page 274 of the Archives at Nashville. A third grant, No. 650, also called for two hundred acres on the south side of the Holston in Hawkins County. It is dated January 6, 1795, and is recorded in Book 3, page 462, of the Archives.

27. Some are of the opinion that the Longmires came from England. Prof. Thomas, on the other hand, believes that this family was brought to Maniken Town above Richmond, by General Gabriel Maupin of France.
28. From the notes of W. H. Thomas.
29. Copies of these booklets may be obtained by writing the author: John Rice Irwin, Box 359, Norris, Tennessee. The price is 25c.
30. White, *op. cit.* pp. 149-150.
31. *Ibid.*
32. "Wills, Bonds and Inventories, 1807-1841," From the Campbell County Records. Big Valley, at that time, was a part of Campbell County as Union County was not then formed.
33. *Ibid.*
34. These were impressions of the late Crit Sharp and related by W. H. Thomas. Sharp, for many years, was an avid student of the Big Valley area where his ancestors lived.
35. Sally Rice Northern of Martel has two of these rifles, both apparently in good condition. Another, I understand, is in the possession of the family of the late Willie Irwin of Knoxville. Still another of these rifles is owned by the family of the late Edward Woods of Andersonville, son of George Woods and Annie Rice Woods. Annie Rice Woods was the daughter of George Rice, the gunsmith. David R. Irwin of Clinton also owns one of these old weapons.
36. W. H. Thomas gives the following concise history of the Snodderly family:

The first Snodderly to come to Pennsylvania was one Georg Philip Schnatterly. (I retain the German spelling advisedly. A son of this man married Elizabeth (?) and settled in Haw River Valley in present Alamance County, N. C. He signed his will "Philip Snotherly." John, son of this man changed the name to Snodderly. Others spelled it Snoderly.)

This family originated in Austria and were Hussites. Persecuted, the family moved into Wurtenburg where George Philip Schnatterly was born in 1702. He came on the ship *Pleasant*, October 11, 1732. He settled in Lancaster County, Pa., where a Palatine named Hans Niclas Eisenhauer was his neighbor. They both belonged to the same church. When a son was born to Hans Eisenhauer, he was named Georg Philip Eisenhauer, and neighbor Schnatterly stood as sponsor when the child was christened. This was the ancestor of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Georg Philip Schnatterly married Sabina Schnaberly (Snavelly).

Jacob "Snotherly," brother to John and son of Philip, married Mary Loy and has numerous Snotherly descendants near Burlington,

N. C. Henry, brother to John and Jacob, came and settled at York Springs near the present site of Andersonville, where he died and was buried. He came to Tennessee about 1820. His son Henry Snoderly was born on Big Sandy in 1810 and was murdered on Hinds' Creek by Cox and Stanley in February, 1894.

Of such fine ancestry was our subject Marcellus Moss Rice. It is no wonder to a genealogist that with such blood in his veins, he is the honest, sober, industrious, patriotic, self-reliant individualist that he is. If every citizen were of his build and stature, morally speaking, there would be no need for prisons or for courts except for the keeping of records. Taxation then would not burden all of us.

CHAPTER III

1. James Longmire was the father of Wayne Longmire, leading businessman of Knoxville. In addition to other interests he served for many years as President and Chairman of the Board for Security Mills, with plants throughout the South.

CHAPTER VI

1. See biographical sketch of Rufus Rice in appendix.



